



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°882 Vienna, 2 May 2018

EU Statement on the Security situation in and around Ukraine

The EU and its Member States remain concerned by the highly volatile security situation along the line of contact. We recall in this context the address of Ambassadors Sajdik and Apakan to the Permanent Council last week, reminding us of the sad humanitarian costs of the conflict. Civilians continue to suffer from the violence and the danger posed by mines and UXOs, as well as damage to civilian infrastructure from shelling. We therefore reiterate our call on all sides to comply with their obligations on demining, including the TCG 's Decision on mine action of March 2016, to disengage and to remove heavy weapons, especially from populated areas, in order to ensure successful ceasefire implementation.

Mr. Chairperson, any restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement are unacceptable. The SMM continued to face impediments to its work mostly in non-government controlled areas. On 28 April at a check-point north of non-government controlled Horlivka, Russian-backed separatists threatened an SMM patrol with detention by a "special forces team". In the week of 16-22 April, in addition to restrictions posed by the presence of mines and UXOs, the SMM was restricted in 11 instances in non-government controlled areas and three times in government controlled areas. Furthermore, the SMM's access to areas near the border with the Russian Federation continued to be systematically denied by separatists, citing instructions from their 'superiors'. Furthermore, we remain extremely concerned by SMM reports of continued targeting of SMM UAVs with small arms fire and electronic jamming. We urge all sides to respect the SMM's mandate which calls for full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine including along the Ukrainian-Russian border and on the Crimean peninsula, and to halt any targeting and obstructing of their technical equipment.

We reiterate our concerns over Russia's withdrawal from the JCCC. Due to this unilateral step, a number of important repair works in areas outside government control have been

stalled for lack of security guarantees. We reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to return to the JCCC. We also call on Russia and Ukraine to re-establish the functionality of the JCCC and to strengthen cooperation within its framework.

We call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs, to meet these commitments in full. We reiterate our deep concern regarding information about the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone. We call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn. All foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries must be removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential.

We recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and call upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to recognise these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

The Candidate Countries, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.