



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1191
Vienna, 5 July 2018**

**EU Statement on “Russia’s Ongoing Aggression against
Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea”**

Mr. Chairperson, we welcome the agreement made in the Trilateral Contact Group on a harvest ceasefire as of 1 July but we regret that we are still to see it come into effect on the ground. We welcome all recommitments to ceasefire as they can offer a much needed respite for suffering civilians. However, we have seen recommitment after recommitment be replaced by intensified fighting. We strongly urge the sides to make this recommitment to ceasefire a permanent and comprehensive one. This implies full disengagement and withdrawal of heavy weapons.

Mr. Chairperson, the situation on the ground is insecure and unpredictable which also puts our monitors at risk. On 22 June in Petrivske, a member of the Russia-backed armed formations forced an SMM patrol to drive on a mine-contaminated road. Displaying signs of intoxication and carrying an assault rifle, he left the SMM vehicles no other choice but to drive back across a freshly dug ditch near the identified mine. We condemn this incident in the strongest possible terms. It constitutes a direct and serious threat to the safety and security of our SMM monitors and is a severe violation of the SMM's mandate. We renew our call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs to put an end to such violations.

The incident took place just over a year after the fatal incident of 23 April 2017 near Pryshyb, where an American SMM paramedic tragically lost his life due to a mine explosion. After that incident, the SMM wrote to the signatories of the Minsk agreements on 5 May 2017 calling for measures to ensure the SMM's safe and secure access. This includes providing information on areas suspected or confirmed to be contaminated by mines or UXOs. Over one year later, the specified actions

have not been undertaken. Of further concern is that the SMM, in addition, continues to observe newly laid mines, despite the prohibition on laying new mines. We call on the sides to live up to their commitments and immediately stop laying mines and undertake extensive demining.

Mr. Chairperson, despite explicit security guarantees, the SMM registered around 625 ceasefire violations in a 15km radius from the Donetsk Filtration Station during the reporting period 18-24 June. We reiterate our call to create a safety zone around this and other critical civilian infrastructure sites. The continued fighting puts civilians at risk and threatens to cut off their water supply. We also repeat our call on the Russian Federation to return to the JCCC and on Russia and Ukraine to re-establish the functionality of the JCCC and to strengthen cooperation within its framework.

Despite our repeated calls for an immediate stop to jamming and targeting of the SMM's UAVs, the targeting continues. We strongly condemn any attack on SMM equipment. The operational, security and financial consequences of these obstructions must be assessed and the parties responsible for any damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs should be held accountable, including politically and financially.

On 28 June, yet another so-called "humanitarian convoy" from Russia was observed entering into Ukrainian territory at the Donetsk Border Crossing Point. This was the 76th of its kind. Mr. Chairperson, the presence of these so-called "humanitarian convoys" occurs without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed. The Minsk agreements foresee that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. An agreement on this in the humanitarian working group remains crucial.

The EU remains firm in its call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these must be restored. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility and to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full. We again call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists, and we remain deeply concerned about information on the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in separatist-held areas. The

duration of the European Union's economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and calls 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 stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since March 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation. We will not recognise it. The European Union will remain committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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