



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on Russian Unusual Military Activities and the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States welcome once again the agreement on a ceasefire reached in Minsk on 5 September 2014 which, we hope, will be a first step towards a sustainable political solution, based on respect for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

We stress once again that, in accordance with the ceasefire agreement, permanent monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian state border and withdrawal of illegal armed groups and Russian forces operating on Ukrainian territory, as well as comprehensive observation of the implementation of the ceasefire, must be integral parts of such approach.

We continue to follow closely the developments on the ground. In this respect, we took note of the ongoing process of release of hostages and illegally detained persons. At the same time, numerous breaches of the Minsk Protocol are observed and reported by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. The SMM vehicles were hit by artillery fragments while patrolling in the area East of Donetsk; we reiterate therefore our call for the safe and free access throughout Ukraine for all SMM monitors in order to fulfil their mandate and duties. We urge all sides to respect and fully implement the ceasefire.

As already pointed out during the opening session of the Monegasque FSC Chairmanship, it is our firm opinion that upholding OSCE politico-military commitments and mandates and making best and full use of them, both in letter and in spirit, is of paramount importance for decisively de-escalating the situation on the ground thus moving back the trend of violence to peaceful political solution of the crisis in and around Ukraine.

We keep encouraging therefore all participating States, and in particular the Russian Federation, to show maximum level of transparency, good will and restraint with regard to military activities. Trust and confidence must be restored by open and constructive dialogue and consultations within the FSC and other relevant politico-military mechanisms, as well as by offering voluntary verification measures and additional information concerning military activities in the bordering areas via the OSCE channels.

In view of reports about local so called elections having taken place in Crimea and Sevastopol, we recall that the European Union recognises neither the legal framework nor the legitimacy of these so called elections. Furthermore, we took note of the second humanitarian convoy dispatched by the Russian Federation to Eastern Ukraine and we are of the opinion that fundamental international humanitarian law principles have not been observed in this case. This way of proceeding was therefore illegal, in breach of Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty.

In this context, the European Union reiterates its strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and will not recognise it. The European Union stands firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and calls upon the Russian Federation to do likewise.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA^{*}, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND^{**} and ALBANIA, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA 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.

^{**} Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.