



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1041 Vienna, 26 February 2015

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#### **EU Statement on Russia's Ongoing Aggression against Ukraine and Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments**

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The European Union strongly condemns the terrorist attack that killed at least four persons in Kharkiv on 22 February. This was an atrocious attack on a peaceful march commemorating the anniversary of the events of February 2014. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families.

Mr Chairman, full implementation of the Minsk agreements by all signatories remains the only way forward towards a sustainable political solution based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity as confirmed in UN Security Council Resolution 2202. We welcome the Normandy format ministerial meeting held in Paris on 24 February 2015 and support efforts in this format to work on implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We strongly condemn that the attacks by Russia-backed separatists have continued in parts of eastern Ukraine, notably in Debaltseve, despite agreement on a ceasefire. The SMM's consistent reports of ceasefire violations near Mariupol, as well as in other areas, are also of great concern. We call on Russia to use its influence over the separatists to fully implement their commitments made and to stop the inflow of fighters and military equipment from Russia. Further attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory in eastern Ukraine will seriously undermine all efforts promoting political resolution of the conflict.

Full respect for the ceasefire is a basic precondition for the implementation of other provisions of the Minsk agreements as outlined in the 'package' of 12 February. We continue to note the many observations of heavy military equipment in areas controlled by the separatists. This corresponds to evidence of continued and growing support given to the separatists by Russia. We hope that the signing of a plan of

withdrawal of heavy weapons will soon result in further progress on the ground as foreseen in the Minsk package. But we note the comments of the Chief Monitor, in his latest report on implementation of the package, on the continued need for the SMM to receive detailed information to support implementation. We call on all signatories to provide the SMM with the support and information needed to fulfil its task under the Minsk package, including what heavy weapons they have, where these weapons are now, which routes will be used for the withdrawal and where they will be located after the withdrawal. We note with particular concern that the so-called LPR has so far only expressed an intention to comply with its undertakings in Minsk. We regret that one signatory, the Russian Federation, has not yet replied to the letter of Ambassador Apakan of 13 February. We further regret the unhelpful and unfounded criticism of the SMM by the Russian Foreign Ministry in its statement of 25 February.

We also expect an immediate withdrawal of all foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine under monitoring of the OSCE and disarmament of all illegal groups. We welcome the latest exchange of detainees as a first step towards the release of all detainees as also foreseen in the Minsk package. As part of this process, we urge Russia to immediately release all Ukrainian citizens illegally held in Russia.

We recall that the Minsk package calls for humanitarian aid to be delivered through an international mechanism. We deeply regret that, as we discussed earlier today, a so-called 'humanitarian convoy' from Russia has recently again entered Ukrainian territory, 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.

Mr Chairman, the SMM has a vital role to play in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The EU reiterates its support for an extension of the SMM's mandate, and stands ready to further support it, including through financial and operational contributions. We are concerned about the frequent reports of SMM monitors being denied access and threatened by separatists. We call on all sides to ensure security and safety and unrestricted access for SMM monitors. We also call for unrestricted

access for the SMM UAVs to all parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and along the border with Russia.

We once again express our support for the work of Ambassador Tagliavini and the Trilateral Contact Group of Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE Chairmanship. The Trilateral Contact Group must continue to play an essential role. We also reiterate our support for the efforts of the Chairmanship. We have noted previous statements by the Chair and believe that acts such as those committed by the Russia-backed separatists in Debaltseve deserve a very strong condemnation.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We once again urge Russia to recognise by acts these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

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 the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.