



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1053 Vienna, 21 May 2015

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

The European Union strongly supports the ongoing work of Special Representative Tagliavini within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE Chairmanship. We welcome the meetings of the working groups under the Trilateral Contact Group. The Trilateral Contact Group itself must continue to play an essential role in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. We remain convinced that the meetings of the working groups should contribute to a political process towards the full implementation of the Minsk agreements based on OSCE principles and commitments and full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. We encourage the sides to continue their work and to demonstrate the political will to make the working groups effective. We reiterate our support to the ongoing efforts of the Normandy format in facilitating the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

At the same time, we remain deeply concerned about the continued ceasefire violations, although we note recent SMM reports that the situation has been relatively calm in the southern region of Donetsk, including in Shyrokyne, and in the Luhansk region. The build-up of Russian troops next to the Ukrainian border and information about continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation add to our concern. Recent developments once again reconfirm the direct involvement of military personnel of the Russian Federation. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will be a gross violation of the Minsk agreements and seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution.

We repeat our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We also expect

Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full. The ceasefire must be respected, heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment as well as mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its border remains essential. We once again call on the Minsk signatories to provide the SMM with the full baseline information and access that would allow for credible verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons. We recall that all hostages and illegally detained persons related to the conflict in and around Ukraine should be released as stipulated in the Minsk package. This notably includes Nadiya Savchenko and Oleh Sentsov. We recall the European Council Conclusions of 19-20 March in all their elements, in particular those linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The provisions of the Minsk agreements concerning the political process are also of major importance and require swift and sustained progress in accordance with the agreed sequence and calendar. This includes dialogue and agreement on modalities on and the holding of local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and relevant OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. We are concerned that ODIHR staff were denied access to separatist controlled areas. The necessary access and security guarantees should be granted to ODIHR staff.

We note with deep concern from the SMM's reports that the mission continues to face restrictions in its monitoring activities. We note in particular that access remains fully or partly restricted in large swaths of separatist-controlled territory, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We once again urge all parties to ensure safe, full and unhindered access for the SMM to all parts of the conflict areas, including those controlled by the Russia-backed separatists, also in the border area with Russia.

We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continue to enter 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.

We join the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in welcoming the adoption of a law increasing the penalties for crimes committed against journalists and their close relatives. Like the Representative, we trust that these important legislative changes will contribute to ensuring journalists' safety in Ukraine. At the same time, we note the Representative's concern regarding recent laws relating to the history of Ukraine.

Mr Chairman, 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 country NORWAY, member 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.