



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1063 Vienna, 23 July 2015

EU Statement on the Violation of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation and the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union welcomes this week's meetings in the working groups under the auspices of the Trilateral Contact Group, as well as some progress made in the discussions. The European Union reiterates its strong support to the work of the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE Chairmanship and encourages the parties to meet on a weekly basis, also independently of the working groups. The Trilateral Contact Group must continue to play an essential role in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. In this regard we reiterate our support for the efforts of the Normandy format in facilitating the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Mr Chairman, we express our deep concern about the escalation of violence in and around Donetsk and Avdiivka over the weekend, which has claimed the lives of several civilians. We stress that the ceasefire must be respected by all sides and that restraint is needed to de-escalate the situation and avoid the loss of innocent lives. The presence, movement and use of heavy weapons in violation of the Minsk agreements are also of major concern. We note in this context that SMM's UAVs continue to observe large concentrations of military hardware in and around Komsomolske, and the SMM noted an apparent link in the logistical supply-chain underpinning military operations, as stated in the most recent weekly report. 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 to promote a sustainable political resolution.

We repeat our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments. The ceasefire must be respected, heavy weapons

withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment as well as mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. 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.

We once again commend the SMM's impartial and objective reporting. We note with deep concern from the SMM's reports that the mission continues to face restrictions in its monitoring activities, in particular that access remains fully or partly restricted in large swaths of separatist-controlled territory. The systematic jamming of SMM UAVs over large swaths of "DPR"-controlled areas is also of great concern. We call on all sides to ensure safe, full and unhindered access for SMM monitors and UAVs to all parts of Ukraine, including to the Crimean peninsula and along the border with Russia.

The European Union expresses its concern regarding the humanitarian impact of the on-going crisis in parts of eastern Ukraine and note in particular from the SMM's reports that the "DPR" and "LPR" seem "slow to provide for the most basic human and societal needs" in areas under their control. The Minsk package foresees that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. An agreement on this in the humanitarian working group remains crucial. 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 welcome last Thursday's vote by large majority of the Verkhovna Rada comprising coalition and opposition MPs, paving the way for constitutional change enabling decentralisation as well as further necessary reform of the prosecution. The amendments voted for contain an enabling clause for a specific procedure of self-government in certain administrative units in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, in line with the recommendation of the Venice Commission. This is important for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We look forward to the final approval of these amendments by September, ahead of the planned local elections the 25th October. The EU considers constitutional reform a key element of the on-going

reform process in Ukraine and an important aspect of a political resolution of the conflict.

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 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 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.