



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council N°1079 Vienna, 26 November 2015

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

The European Union remains concerned by the significant increase in ceasefire violations. Concrete steps by all sides are urgently needed to halt and reverse this deterioration, consolidate the ceasefire and move towards a sustainable political settlement in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

On 16 October SMM Chief Monitor Apakan sent a letter to the signatories of the Minsk Package of Measures informing them that clearer and more effective verification requirements would be introduced as of 9 November. Some 40 days since the letter was sent and more than two weeks since the new requirements entered into force, the SMM has yet to receive the necessary information. This runs counter to several assurances given by all parties. Such delays can undermine the withdrawal process. We reiterate our call for unconditional and verifiable withdrawal of all heavy weapons in line with the Minsk Package of Measures.

In large swaths of separatist-held areas, significant restrictions continue to impede the SMM's UAVs and monitors, in particular along the state border with Russia. These must be lifted without further delay. Moreover, we regret that the SMM has not yet been ensured the security necessary to set up planned Forward Patrol Bases in separatist-held parts of Donetsk. We once again urge the Russia-backed separatists to cooperate fully and immediately to this end. Full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including Crimea and separatist-held areas along the Ukrainian-Russian border, is crucial for the SMM to fulfil its mandate.

We again call on the sides in the Political Working Group to work towards agreement on the modalities of local elections in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions

in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, relevant OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. It is important that established conditions for ODIHR observation are met, including ensuring security and access for ODIHR.

The European Union remains firm in its call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and also again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their commitments. We recall that the duration of the EU economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. The ceasefire must be respected. All heavy weapons must be withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential. We reiterate our concern about reports regarding the continued presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia. We have never received a satisfactory explanation on the presence of a Zhytel jamming station and a TOS-1 Buratino in separatist-held areas. This lack of clarification has done nothing to allay our concerns.

Mr Chair, the European Union 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, to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilise the situation and to 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* 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.