



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°961
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EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

Madame Chair, the European Union and its Member States call on the sides to continue to respect the ceasefire and refrain from actions that would put at risk this undeniable achievement. We commend the restraint shown by Ukraine in the face of multiple incidents, resulting in casualties among its military personnel.

We share the concern, expressed last week by Ambassador Grau, about the repeated ceasefire violations in the area around the Donetsk Filtering Station, which account for almost 44% of all ceasefire violations recorded by the SMM since July. We underline the crucial importance of the Donetsk Filtering Station for water supplies for 380.000 people on both sides of the contact line. A damage to this critical infrastructure, even an unintentional one, could have dire humanitarian consequences.

We regret that at the latest meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group, yet again, no tangible progress has been reached as regards the four envisaged additional disengagement areas and the de-mining plan, despite the readiness shown by Ukraine. We hoped to see that at least all the EECPs, including the two new ones in Shchastia and Zolote, would become operational on both sides of the contact line. We commend Ukraine for its decision to open the EECPs in line with the N4 commitments and we regret that the other side is still withholding its opening decision.

We reiterate our strong support for the Minsk agreements and the efforts of both the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy Format to find a peaceful resolution of

the conflict, in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We call on Russia to show a constructive approach in these negotiations. Winter is coming, with only two programmed TCG meetings left until the end of the year and many urgent issues still to be settled. We are convinced that with political will, progress can be achieved. We saw it in July.

Madame Chair, last week in this Forum we expressed our appreciation to the SMM for its latest two thematic reports on restrictions to the freedom of movement of the Mission and on civilian casualties of this conflict. The SMM corroborated almost 950 civilian casualties since January 2017. It is estimated that since the beginning of the conflict in 2014 altogether more than 13.000 people have perished and 30.000 were injured. We deeply regret this huge human toll that should never have been allowed to happen.

In this context, we do not accept insinuations raised at our last meeting about an alleged co-responsibility for the civilian casualties by those participating States who, in accordance with international law and fundamental OSCE principles, conduct transparent military cooperation with Ukraine.

The SMM's valuable monitoring work continues to provide us with reliable information. For example, on 8 November, an SMM mini-UAV spotted on the ground near the city of Luhansk a UAV reconnaissance complex Navodchik-2. This piece of modern military equipment manufactured in Russia is yet another indication of this country's military support to the armed formations.

Moreover, SMM long-range UAVs continue to observe military-type trucks travelling on dirt track roads in areas next to the border with Russia in non-government-controlled areas or crossing this border at night in places with no official border crossings.

This is one of the reasons why we remain concerned about the continuing restrictions on the SMM freedom of movement which occur overwhelmingly in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations as clearly demonstrated in the thematic report released last week. We recall that the SMM must have access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including to the temporarily non-government-controlled parts of its

international border and to the Crimean peninsula. All impediments to the SMM's work, including attempts to destroy SMM's assets, are unacceptable and should be removed. We call on Russia to contribute to halting these impediments.

In conclusion, we remain firm in our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution to the conflict in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these principles and commitments must be restored. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs to meet these commitments in full. We reiterate our deep concern about the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone. We call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the armed formations. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn. All foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries must be removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential.

We recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and call 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 stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. We continue to call on Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov in accordance with international law. We express our deep concern about the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia, which continues to impact the security situation in the Black Sea region and beyond.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the

European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.