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EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 760
Vienna, 16 July 2014**

EU Statement on Russian Unusual Military Activities and the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States are deeply concerned about the latest developments in parts of eastern Ukraine, including the reports of a flow of significant new quality and quantity of arms and equipment, and militants across the border from Russia to Ukraine, the reported explosion on the Russian side of the border and the reported violations of the border by Russian military aircrafts, as well as the attacks by illegal armed groups on targets in Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the vicinity of the border. The increased violence and massive use of heavy and sophisticated military equipment by the illegal armed groups has led to a high number of casualties. We regret the deaths reported and condemn the shooting down of the Ukrainian military aircraft in Luhansk region on 14 July.

We reiterate our support for President Poroshenko's Peace Plan and regarding his decision to resume security operations in eastern Ukraine, we recognise Ukraine's right and obligation to uphold law and order on its territory and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We encourage the Ukrainian authorities to maintain a measured and proportionate approach in this regard which does not endanger civilians.

The European Union calls on the Russian Federation to support the peace plan of the Ukrainian President by adopting effective measures to stop the continued flow of illegal fighters, arms and equipment across the border into Ukraine and by using its influence on the pro-Russian armed separatists in eastern Ukraine to stop the violence and lay down their weapons.

Abiding fully and in good faith by all OSCE politico-military commitments is crucial in order to achieve tangible and lasting de-escalation of the situation, thus paving the way for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in and around Ukraine. Military transparency and a

cooperative spirit should be maximised in order to dispel legitimate concerns and avoid miscalculations. All those concerned, and in particular the Russian Federation, should contribute to this end by, inter alia, hosting voluntary verification measures under the Vienna Document, exercising restraint in carrying out military activities in the bordering areas, as well as sharing information about on-going and planned military activities in these areas via the OSCE communication channels.

We have repeated this request to the Russian Federation several times without getting any satisfactory replies, whereas we witness full transparency and cooperation by Ukraine in this respect.

As already stated last week, the kidnapping by illegal armed groups in eastern Ukraine, subsequent transfer to the territory of the Russian Federation and detention there of Ukrainian military pilot Nadiia Savchenko raises many questions with regard to Russia's involvement in the crisis in Ukraine and its respect for its international obligations. We call for the immediate release of Ms. Savchenko.

In conclusion, we reiterate that the European Union stands firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We call upon the Russian Federation to do likewise. The European Union reiterates its strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and will not recognise it.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO and ALBANIA, the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, 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.