

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 789
Vienna, 20 May 2015****EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine**

The European Union and its Member States strongly support all diplomatic efforts, including in the Normandy format, towards achieving a sustainable political solution to the crisis in and around Ukraine which must be based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We welcome the establishment of the working groups under the Trilateral Contact Group and encourage the sides to contribute to a political process toward the full implementation of the Minsk agreements based on OSCE principles and achieve decisive de-escalation of the situation on the ground. In this respect, we look forward to achieving progress in the negotiations within the Security Working Group on withdrawal of heavy weapons and disengagement of troops.

The persistent significant ceasefire violations and their spill over, in particular onto government controlled areas north-west of Luhansk and north-east of Mariupol, continue to claim lives and damage civilian infrastructure and private houses. We strongly condemn the shelling of residential areas and their use as firing positions in breach of international law which further endangers the lives of civilians.

At the same time, we reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution of the conflict.

We note with deep concern that heavy weapons continue to be deployed and used by the parties in areas proscribed by the Minsk agreements. Furthermore, SMM continues to observe significant build-up and movement of military hardware and forces, notably on the separatists' side of the contact line in and around Donetsk city and north-east of Mariupol.

Against this worrying backdrop, we strongly remind the sides of the imperative need to stop fighting and ensure full and comprehensive ceasefire as well as unreserved support to the SMM de-escalatory efforts. In particular, the SMM should be provided with the requested baseline information that would allow for credible verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons without further delay.

We urge all sides to swiftly and fully implement all provisions of the Minsk agreements and expect Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full. Equally, foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well

as mercenaries must be withdrawn from the territory of Ukraine as stipulated in the Minsk Package. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard as well.

We remain deeply concerned about information of the build-up of Russian troops next to the Ukrainian border and in the illegally annexed Crimean Peninsula as well as of continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation.

We appeal for substantial and effective OSCE monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border with Russia remains essential.

In this context, we recall that the Minsk package foresees that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory, including outside the area of deployment of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk, according to the SMM daily report of 15 May. They do so without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

The European Union reiterates its commitment to fully implement its policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. We stand firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and call upon the Russian Federation to do likewise.

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 EFTA and the European Economic Area.