



## EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1000  
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### **EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine**

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Mr Chair, the ongoing unprovoked, threatening military build-up by Russia near its borders with Ukraine as well as in the illegally annexed Crimea are of a serious concern as is the deployment of Russian troops to Belarus. This is all accompanied by hostile rhetoric, destabilising actions and demands by Russia that would effectively restrain sovereignty of other participating States. We underline the importance of military transparency in order to mitigate threat perceptions and prevent further escalation and recall that in the OSCE we have tools at our disposal to that effect. We call on Russia and Belarus to comply to and fully implement all existing commitments.

The EU and its Member States stand firmly with Ukraine in the face of this intimidating behaviour. We continue to call on Russia to cease its continued aggressive actions, to de-escalate, to abide by international law and to engage constructively in dialogue through the established international mechanisms. We made it clear on multiple occasions that any further military aggression against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs, including through a wide array of sectorial and individual restrictive measures, in close coordination with our partners.

Diplomacy and dialogue, in line with the key principles that underpin European security, are the way to improve the security situation and to safeguard peace and stability on our continent. The OSCE is the appropriate forum to address any security

concern by any participating State. In this context, we welcome yesterday's high-level event to launch the "Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue" here in Vienna, a timely initiative of the Polish CiO that we staunchly support. We count on active participation in this process of all participating States.

The EU and its Member States reiterate that political will and constructive engagement in the Normandy Format and in the Trilateral Contact Group are indispensable for a further progress towards the implementation of the Minsk agreements. We call on Russia, as a party to the conflict, to respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and to implement its part of the Minsk agreements in good faith. The positive atmosphere of the last round of meetings is encouraging and we hope to see it prevail in the coming days and weeks.

We underline once again the invaluable work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and its impartial reporting. We support the SMM Chief Monitor's call for a timely decision on the mission's budget and mandate prolongation. We recall that the SMM should have, in accordance with its mandate, access to the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Its freedom of movement has however been chronically violated by Russia-backed armed formations. Demands, as for example those highlighted in the spot reports on 3 and 4 February, that the Mission should pre-notify its presence or passage to non-government controlled areas contradict the very concept of monitoring and hence are totally unacceptable and must be ceased immediately.

Moreover, the SMM's technical assets continue to be targeted. The annex to the last weekly report confirms a worrying trend of rising interference with SMM's UAVs. An occurrence of this type was reported on 2 February when a soldier of the Ukrainian Armed Forces prevented the pre-announced flight of a mini-UAV. We welcome in this context the announcement by Ukraine of steps to investigate this specific and isolated case of interference with the work of the Mission in order to prevent such

incidents in the future. We wish to see a similar attitude from Russia and the armed formations it backs regarding their impediments to the freedom of movement of the SMM monitors and operations of the SMM assets.

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 the REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\* and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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