



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°832
Vienna, 12 October 2016**

**EU Statement on the security situation in and around
Ukraine**

The European Union and its Member States underline the importance of disengagement as a significant step towards a full and sustainable ceasefire. The agreement on disengagement is a vital instrument for building confidence and we urge the sides to seize this opportunity and intensify their efforts in order to achieve concrete progress on the ground.

We once again stress the important role the SMM plays in this regard and urge the sides to provide the Mission with full, safe and unfettered access throughout the conflict area. The Mission's access to the agreed disengagement areas is particularly important in this context, as unhindered monitoring and verification of the disengagement process by the SMM are essential to ensure and facilitate that the disengagement is implemented and further maintained. We underline the vital role of the JCCC in ensuring the security of the SMM and in supporting a coordinated and synchronized disengagement. We also recall the obligation of the sides on mine action, as the risks stemming from the presence of mines and unexploded ordnance further hamper the Mission's access and monitoring ability. We condemn any obstructions to the SMM's work. As reported by the Chief Monitor Apakan last week, the SMM was denied access on 158 occasions between 21 July and 27 September and 72 per cent of all denials of access were imposed on the SMM in areas not controlled by the Government. We deplore aggressive and hostile actions towards the SMM, such as the incident on 7 October at Oktiabr mine in the separatist-controlled area where an armed man threatened a monitoring team inspecting the SMM's camera. Such incidents must stop immediately and those responsible must be held accountable.

As the security situation on the ground continues to be tense and unpredictable with ebbs and flows in ceasefire violations, we underline the need to respect the ceasefire and to consolidate the recent progress by ensuring full, swift and verifiable disengagement, as well as the verifiable withdrawal of all Minsk-regulated weapons.

We call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet these commitments in full. We reiterate our deep concern regarding information 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 separatists. 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, and call upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to strictly observe these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by 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 countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members 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.