



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 796 Vienna, 16 September 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States welcome the significant reduction in cease-fire violations as reported by the Special Monitoring Mission. We hope that the relative calm in recent weeks constitutes progress towards a comprehensive and sustainable cease-fire and we urge all sides to consolidate it.

To this end, an agreement on the withdrawal of tanks and artillery under 100 mm, to be verified by the SMM, is urgently needed. We call for an agreement without further delay in order to solve this outstanding issue. We welcome in this context the recent meeting of the Normandy format on 12 September and hope that it will give further impetus to the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and its subordinate working groups in finalising and implementing such an agreement. The TCG must continue to play an essential role in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Furthermore, we underline the need for an effective and unrestricted verification regime which would allow the SMM to independently verify the withdrawal of heavy weapons as well as tanks and artillery under 100 mm from the respective exclusion zones. We also welcome the agreement in the Normandy format that no further mining should take place and efforts towards demining should be undertaken. In this context, we support the OSCE Projects Coordinator's in Ukraine ongoing assistance and cooperation with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine in cleaning territories in eastern Ukraine of unexploded ordnance. We reiterate our strong support to the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format, aimed at achieving a sustainable political solution to the crisis. Such a solution must be based on OSCE principles and commitments, and in full respect of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

We repeat our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full respect of Ukraine's territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty. The cease-fire must be fully respected, the existing agreement on withdrawal of heavy weapons must be implemented and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities'

responsibility in this regard. We also expect the Russian Federation to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full.

Despite the reduction in cease-fire violations, the situation on the ground remains tense as not all heavy weapons have been withdrawn from the security zone and military personnel remains on the contact line. We therefore underline the vital role the SMM plays including in verifying any new withdrawal of weapons. We reiterate our call on all parties to enable free and safe access of the SMM to the whole territory of Ukraine, including the Crimean peninsula and along the border with Russia. We are disturbed by the fact that the mission continues to face significant restrictions in its monitoring activities, in particular in the separatist-controlled areas. As reported by the SMM, its freedom of movement has been challenged by separatists on an almost daily basis. Restrictions on freedom of movement also extend to the SMM's visits to heavy weapons holding areas. We remain concerned about the increasing risk posed by mines and unexploded ordnance to SMM personnel as well as the civilian population.

We reiterate our call on those in effective control of the area to assist the SMM in retrieving the UAV which was lost, most probably shot down, over separatist-controlled territory. We are requesting the delegation of the Russian Federation to kindly explain the presence of the highly sophisticated military R-330ZH Zhitel jamming communication station in separatist-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine.

Mr Chairman, the EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls 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*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries 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.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.