



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°866 Vienna, 01 November 2017

EU Statement on the Security situation in and around Ukraine

1. The European Union and its Member States express their deep concern regarding the volatile security situation in eastern Ukraine. In its 25 October weekly report, for the second successive week the SMM recorded more than twice as many uses of Minsk-proscribed weaponry than the weekly average since the 'back to school' ceasefire. Continuing ceasefire violations at increased levels and the presence and use of heavy weapons and Minsk-proscribed equipment are a serious hindrance to stabilisation on the ground and create the conditions for an escalation in violence. Renewed impetus in disengagement, withdrawal of heavy weapons to verified storage areas and restraint is urgently needed to minimise this risk. We also regret that casualties and damage to civilian property and infrastructure continues to occur; we therefore urge all sides to take immediate steps to ensure full respect for the ceasefire, the withdrawal of all Minsk-proscribed weapons and recommencement of the stalled disengagement process. As agreed at the TCG meeting on 31 August 2017, we call upon the Minsk Agreement signatories to provide details of forward positions within 3km of the Donetsk Filtration Station, in order to help facilitate the agreed safety zone.
2. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the continued intimidation of and interference with SMM patrols, notably on 25 October east of Mariupol where "DPR" members in military style clothing repeatedly and deliberately pointed a loaded heavy machine gun at a SMM vehicle at very short range. Further aggressive behaviour towards SMM members by armed men was reported at separatist-controlled Siedove on 22 October. These are blatant acts of a threatening and recklessly dangerous nature. Such ill-discipline must be rooted-out and those responsible must be held accountable and brought to justice. Recalling also the likely targeting with small arms fire of a SMM UAV on 23 October in the "DPR"- controlled Petrovskyi district of Donetsk, we reiterate that the SMM and its technical equipment must have full, safe

and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, in line with existing agreements. We restate our calls for SMM freedom of movement to be assured by all sides but wish to highlight, from the SMM weekly report of 25 October 2017, that it is encountering ongoing, pervasive and systematic restrictions of its freedom of movement in the separatist-controlled area of southern Donetsk and locations near the border with the Russian Federation. We believe that Russia can and must do more to prevent incidents and restrictions of this nature and we therefore urge Russia to exercise its influence over the separatists it backs to assure the SMM's safety and unimpeded access, including to the Ukraine-Russia border.

3. Mines and unexploded ordnance are a significant restriction on the monitoring ability of the SMM and continue to pose a grave and indiscriminate threat. We note further recent examples of mine marking and clearance activities, for example at Hranitne and Svitlodarsk. However much more needs to be done to fulfil agreed commitments, and we restate the need for the SMM to be provided with maps that clearly show where mines and UXO ordnance hazards are located in order to enhance their safety and access. We urge all sides to implement their commitments to correctly mark, fence and clear areas contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance.
4. Mr Chairman, on 26th October 2017, the 68th Russian Convoy entered Ukrainian territory at the Donetsk Border Crossing Point, as reported by the OSCE Observer Mission. We deeply regret that, once again, this happened without a full inspection by the Ukrainian border guards and in violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. This does little to allay concerns about the possible military nature of the transported cargo.
5. 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.

6. 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 and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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