



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on Russian Unusual Military Activities and the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States would like to start by expressing our appreciation to the Moldovan Chairmanship for having steered the FSC throughout a challenging period in a dedicated and highly professional manner. We will elaborate further on the work done during the second trimester and the period ahead on the occasion of the assumption of the FSC Chairmanship by Monaco on 10 September 2014.

The downing of the Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 in Donetsk, Ukraine on 17 July has highlighted the global dimension of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and further increases the urgency to bring the crisis in and around Ukraine to an end. Without prejudging the facts behind the downing of the aircraft, the European Union has called on all parties to stop the senseless loss of life in Eastern Ukraine, to refrain from any escalatory acts, and to agree to an immediate ceasefire.

Recalling UNSC Resolution 2166 unanimously adopted on 21 July and the OSCE Permanent Council Declaration of 18 July, we express serious concern that illegal armed groups in Ukraine have impeded immediate, safe, secure and unrestricted access to the crash site and surrounding area for the appropriate investigating authorities and the OSCE SMM, and took actions to destroy, move or disturb wreckage, equipment, debris, personal belongings, and remains. We support the call for a full, transparent and independent investigation in accordance with the international civil aviation guidelines.

The EU emphasises that those directly and indirectly responsible for the downing must be held accountable and brought to justice and calls on all states and parties to fully cooperate to this end.

We remain concerned about the deteriorating security situation in parts of Eastern Ukraine and in particular, in the city of Luhansk, where, as reflected in reporting from the

SMM, continuing shelling has recently resulted in fatalities and injuries amongst the civilian population which we deeply regret.

The European Union strongly condemns the continuation of illegal activities by armed militants in Eastern Ukraine, including the occupation of public buildings, hostage-taking and armed attacks on Ukrainian law enforcers and border guards. We urge the Russian Federation to stop the increasing flow of weapons, equipment and militants across the border to achieve rapid and tangible results in de-escalation. The European Union further urges the Russian Federation to withdraw its additional troops from the border area.

Turning to the FSC agenda, we took note of the request for explanation of "unusual military activities" put forward by the Russian Federation to Ukraine pursuant paragraph 16.1 of the Vienna Document on 15 July in an endeavour to use the existing OSCE politico-military instruments to dispel security concerns.

We also took note of the answers provided by Ukraine, in particular the information related to the ongoing operation to restore the constitutional order in parts of Eastern Ukraine, and the subsequent response to this clarification by the Russian Federation. We recall, in this respect, Ukraine's right and obligation to uphold law and order on its territory and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity while maintaining a measured and proportionate approach which does not endanger civilians.

The answers provided testify once again to the high level of military transparency displayed by Ukraine throughout the crisis and for their consistent efforts to alleviate tensions. In the same vein, we encourage the Russian Federation to consider further voluntary verification measures under the Vienna Document, to respond to the call by Ukraine for bilateral consultations, to exercise restraint in carrying out military activities in the bordering areas, as well as to share information about on-going and planned military activities via the OSCE communication channels.

In conclusion, we do not accept some positions contained in the Vienna Document notification CBM/RU/14/0102/F41/O released by the Russian Federation, in particular concerning the status of Crimea and Sevastopol. The European Union reiterates its strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and will not recognise it. In this context, we do not accept the position expressed by the Russian Federation in the aforementioned notification on its unilateral

decision to extend its zone of application of CSBMs to the Ukrainian region of Crimea and Sevastopol.

The European Union stands firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and calls upon the Russian Federation to do likewise.

The candidate countries MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.