



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°818 Vienna, 4 May 2016

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#### EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

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The European Union and its Member States welcome the agreement reached on 29 April by the Trilateral Contact Group to provide for full respect of the ceasefire starting with the orthodox Easter and May holidays. We call on all sides to adhere to this agreement. After several weeks of increased shelling and deteriorating security situation, the agreement offers an opportunity to prevent further escalation of violence. We urge all participants of the Minsk process to seize this opportunity. We note that while the violence has abated, ceasefire violations continue on a daily basis. We therefore call for effective and immediate steps to fully disengage, deescalate and observe a strict ceasefire.

We remain concerned about the presence of weapons in the security zone in violation of withdrawal lines, with a large concentration observed on a daily basis in the separatist-controlled Luhansk city. Such steps are in clear violation of Minsk agreements. We therefore repeat our call to unconditionally and verifiably withdraw all Minsk-regulated weapons.

We strongly condemn the continued restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement, the vast majority of which occur in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government. Such actions are unacceptable and must stop immediately. The SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border.

We remain firm in our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments, in order to achieve a sustainable political settlement of the conflict, based on full respect for Ukraine's

sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. 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. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential. We reiterate our concern regarding information about the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone.

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.