



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°841  
Vienna, 18 January 2017**

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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 remain deeply concerned by the ongoing violence in eastern Ukraine. We deplore the sharp escalation in fighting around the Svitlodarsk-Debaltseve area in the fourth week of December, accompanied by allegation of offensive movements at the contact line and changes in forward positions. On 18 December, the SMM recorded nearly 3,000 explosions in this area, including those caused by multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS), artillery and tanks – weapons proscribed by the Minsk Agreements. We regret that while the high level of ceasefire violations decreased after a renewed commitment to adhere to the ceasefire as of midnight on 24 December, ceasefire violations continued throughout the last three weeks. We deeply regret the devastating impact of the increased violence on civilians resulting in lost lives and injuries. Furthermore, the destruction and damage to houses and other essential infrastructure is particularly worrying.

The lack of progress on withdrawal of weapons, the stalemate with regard to disengagement, as well as continued restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement and impediments to the SMM's work further add to our concerns. We urge the sides to fully adhere to the ceasefire, verifiably disengage and withdraw Minsk-proscribed weapons. These are necessary steps in order to ensure a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

We once again underline that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, in particular to the disengagement areas and also along the Ukrainian-Russian State border. We deplore any hostile acts and aggressive behaviour towards the members of the SMM, such as the most recent incidents in separatist-controlled areas in Bairachky, Pikuzy and Stepne, where individuals and

armed men blocked the movement of the SMM, shouted at the monitors and threatened them with a weapon. Such behaviour is unacceptable and must stop immediately. In addition, the repeated nature of these acts continues to raise serious concerns regarding the willingness and ability of the JCCC to properly assist in ensuring the security of the SMM.

Mr. Chairman, on 22 December 2016 the 57th 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 possibly military nature of the transported cargo.

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.