



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°821 Vienna, 25 May 2016

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States are concerned by the volatile security situation in eastern Ukraine. Despite the decrease in violence last week, the situation remains tense and unpredictable. Stabilisation of the ceasefire therefore remains of critical importance. We reiterate our call for effective and immediate steps to fully disengage and deescalate and welcome the SMM's efforts to this end.

We take note of the decrease in the number of freedom-of-movement restrictions imposed on the SMM last week, which continue to occur to a larger extent in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government. Most recent reports about impediments to the SMM's work, including obstructing the remote monitoring equipment in the area of the Donetsk city, give, however, rise to further concerns. We reiterate that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border. Any impediments to the SMM's work are unacceptable and must stop immediately.

We remain firm in calling on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments, including ensuring the ceasefire, as well as those related to agreeing on the modalities of local elections in certain parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR, 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 All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine.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.