



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 800 Vienna, 21 October 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States welcome the fact that the ceasefire is largely holding. However the situation on the ground remains fragile.

We are encouraged by the recent progress in implementing the agreement on smaller calibre weapons of 29 September and underline the need for the SMM to receive sufficient baseline information on storage sites, inventory and withdrawal routes to enable necessary verification. We urge all sides to abide by the withdrawal agreement fully and without delay. This should be accompanied without any further delay by the full and unconditional withdrawal of all heavy weapons in accordance with the Minsk Memorandum of 19 September and the Package of Measures and subject to SMM verification. We note with concern the presence of heavy weapons in violation of withdrawal lines, in particular in separatist-controlled areas as observed by the SMM. We are also disturbed by the concentration of military hardware beyond the respective withdrawal zones, particularly in separatist-controlled areas, and the risk it entails for the security situation on the ground.

We are concerned by the continued jamming of SMM UAVs and the fact that the SMM continues to be hampered in its ability to monitor the situation on the ground on a daily basis, in particular in areas close to the border between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

We underline the urgency to step up demining efforts and stress the responsibility of the sides in this regard in areas under their effective control. As the winter is approaching, quick action is vital before the weather will make it impossible to clear areas of mines and unexploded ordnance. We commend the facilitating and confidence building role of the OSCE SMM in this regard and call on all sides to reach a framework arrangement agreement on this vital issue within the Trilateral Contact Group and the relevant subordinate security working group.

We repeat our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and to honour their commitments in full. The ceasefire must be respected in full, all heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from

Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We recall our concern about the reports regarding continued presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in Ukraine. In this context, we recall our last week's statement and reiterate our request to the delegation of the Russian Federation to explain the presence of the TOS-1 Buratino multi launch rocket system and the R330ZH Zhitel jamming communication system in separatist-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine, as observed by the SMM.

Mr Chairman, 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*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member 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.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.