



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 797 Vienna, 23 September 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States welcome that the recent relative calm along the line of contact, as reported by the Special Monitoring Mission, has largely held. We remain cautiously optimistic, but the security situation remains fragile and casualties continue to occur. We therefore urge all sides to take concrete steps towards consolidating a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire.

We commend the latest efforts of the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group towards achieving a politically sustainable solution based on OSCE principles and commitments, and with full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We reiterate in this context our call for an agreement on the withdrawal of armoured vehicles and artillery under 100 mm, to be verified by the SMM, without further delay. Furthermore, we underline the need for an effective verification regime which would allow the SMM to independently verify the withdrawal of heavy weapons as well as armoured vehicles and artillery under 100 mm from the respective exclusion zones. We also call on all sides to implement the agreement of the Foreign Ministers of the Normandy format that no more landmines should be laid and that efforts to clear mines should now begin.

We repeat our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full respect of Ukraine's territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty. The ceasefire must be fully respected, the existing agreement on withdrawal of heavy weapons must be implemented and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We recall our concern about the reports regarding continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation. We also expect the Russian Federation to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full. The duration of the EU economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We underline the vital role of the SMM in supporting efforts to consolidate the recent progress on the ground, including in monitoring and verifying any new withdrawal of weapons. We reiterate our call on all parties to enable free and safe access of the SMM to the whole territory of Ukraine, including the Crimean peninsula and along the border with Russia. We welcome the improvement of the mission's access to some separatist-controlled areas, but find it unacceptable that the mission continues to face significant restrictions in its monitoring activities in most areas close to the border with the Russian Federation. We regret that, due to the apparent shooting down of an SMM UAV over separatist-controlled territory, as well as persistent jamming, the SMM's UAVs are deliberately hindered to contribute to monitoring at a critical time.

We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continued to enter Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

Mr Chairman, the EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls 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 countries 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.

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