



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°851 Vienna, 3 May 2017

EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States are deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic incident in the vicinity of Pryshyb, in an area held by Russia-backed separatists, on the 23rd April, where one member of the SMM was killed and another two were injured. Our deepest condolences go to the victim's family and friends, and we wish the injured a speedy recovery. We welcome the adoption of the declaration of support for the SMM by the Permanent Council on 27 April calling for a swift, thorough and impartial investigation into this tragic incident and demanding that all those responsible be held to account. We urge Russia to exercise its influence over the separatists it backs to provide the access needed for the OSCE to be able to carry out a full, impartial and transparent investigation.

We note with concern that this incident already appears to be impacting adversely on the SMMs ability to undertake the full range of its functions. We remain strong supporters of the continued work of the SMM and its mandate, which provides for safe and secure access throughout Ukraine. This access must be guaranteed on the ground and provided without reservations, hindrance, or delay. We condemn any attempts to threaten, harass or intimidate SMM monitors or prevent them from carrying out their duties or to destroy or disable OSCE assets.

We remain deeply concerned by the volatile security situation along the line of contact: Despite the decrease in cease-fire violations over the past four weeks, the recommitment to the ceasefire ahead of Easter did not result in a cessation of ceasefire violations. Furthermore, although the SMM registered a decrease in the use of proscribed weapons, the fact that heavy weapons remain in violation of the respective withdrawal lines, as well as the close proximity of the sides and stalemate in the disengagement process, give us further cause for concern, and could allow for a renewed escalation of the conflict. We therefore underscore the urgent need for

progress on a peaceful solution of the conflict. It is high time that the sides implement the commitments they have undertaken in the Minsk Agreements and subsequent agreements by the Trilateral Contact Group.

We reiterate that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border, to be able to implement its mandate. Without proper and unimpeded monitoring, there cannot be a credible and verified improvement of the security situation.

Mr. Chairman, on 27 April 2017, the 62nd 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 and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as 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.