

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council No 1046
Vienna, 26 March 2015**

**EU Statement on Russia's Aggression against Ukraine and
Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments**

The European Union calls on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. Full implementation of all aspects of the agreements by all signatories remains the only way forward towards a sustainable political solution. We recall that the European Council last week agreed that the duration of the restrictive measures against the Russian Federation should be clearly linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. We reiterate that any solution must be based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

As we said earlier today, while we welcome that the security situation elsewhere in Donbass appears relatively calm, we are very concerned about the outbreak of heavy fighting in and around the village of Shyrokyne and the persistent fighting in the area around Donetsk airport. We echo the call made yesterday in Paris for quick de-escalation. We note with deep regret that the SMM continues to observe heavy weapons and the use of heavy weapons in certain areas. We remain deeply concerned that the SMM has still not received the baseline information that would allow for systematic verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons nor does it enjoy free and unhindered access. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will seriously undermine all efforts promoting a political resolution of the conflict.

We once again call for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine under OSCE monitoring as well as disarmament of all illegal groups as foreseen in the Minsk documents. We again underline Russia's responsibility in this regard. We recall that

the Minsk Protocol called for a substantial and effective OSCE monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We reiterate that re-establishing full Ukrainian control over the state border with Russia remains essential.

We recall that in keeping with the commitments of the Minsk package all hostages and detained persons related to the conflict in Ukraine should be released. We once again call on Russia to respect its international commitments and to immediately release Nadiya Savchenko as well as Oleh Sentsov and all other Ukrainian citizens illegally detained in Russia. We will continue to follow these cases very closely. We underline that Russia bears a responsibility for Ms Savchenko's very fragile health.

The provisions of the Minsk agreements concerning the political process are also of major importance and require swift and sustained progress. All signatories of the Minsk Agreements share the responsibility to ensure a full and transparent fulfilment of agreed steps. The Trilateral Contact Group should promote the political process and conduct consultations with ODIHR on organising local elections, as agreed in Paris yesterday. We underline the importance we attach to local elections based on Ukrainian law and OSCE standards. We noted with interest the presentation by the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine and high-level Ukrainian officials this week in Vienna on the new National Dialogue project. We welcome the Ukrainian authorities' decision to request this project to facilitate effective Ukrainian-led and -owned dialogue between the Ukrainian government and different parts of Ukrainian society.

Mr Chairman, we recall that the Minsk package foresees that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. We call for the speedy implementation of such a mechanism, notably through a working group of the Trilateral Contact Group. We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory, without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We once again urge Russia to recognise by acts these fundamental principles that it has itself

invoked many times and to contribute to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to 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.