



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1189
Vienna, 14 June 2018**

**EU Statement on “Russia’s Ongoing Aggression against
Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea”**

The European Union welcomes the most recent meeting of the Foreign Ministers in the Normandy 4 Format on June 11th in Berlin and the intensive discussions that were held. We are hopeful that the meeting and steps to follow will give new momentum to the Minsk process given the worsening security situation at the Contact Line. In addition to concrete implementation steps of the Minsk agreements, a possible UN Mission to the Donbas was discussed.

Mr. Chairperson, we are deeply concerned about the continued disregard for calls to establish safety zones around critical civilian infrastructure. It must happen immediately. Continued shelling around these sites has severe implications for especially civilians living along the line of contact. Last week on 6 June the Donetsk Filtration Station, which supplies water to over 350.000 civilians on both sides of the Contact Line, was once again forced to shut down after power lines were damaged by shelling and the life of the workers was again at high risk. Also last week, the continued fighting led Chief Monitor Apakan to announce that, in light of ongoing ceasefire violations by the sides, the Mission had been obliged to suspend and review its enhanced presence at the facility. Our monitors must be able to stay safe and we therefore fully support the decision made by the Chief Monitor. Throughout the week leading up to his decision the Mission heard approximately 780 ceasefire violations in the area of the Filtration Station, despite explicit security guarantees in place. This placed the unarmed SMM monitors as well as the women and men maintaining the plant in severe danger. We welcome that the SMM subsequently managed to facilitate the reopening of the plant on 9 June. Also given the role played by the JCCC in facilitating repairs to civilian infrastructure, we repeat our call on the Russian Federation to return to the JCCC and on Russia and Ukraine to re-establish the functionality of the JCCC and to strengthen cooperation within its framework.

The suffering of civilians is of paramount concern to the EU, which is the principal donor of humanitarian and early recovery assistance to Ukraine. Since 2014, the European Union and its Member States have contributed over EUR 677 million in humanitarian and early recovery aid in line with humanitarian principles. In March, the European Commission announced a further EUR 24 million of humanitarian assistance in eastern Ukraine. This provides support to the most vulnerable people affected by the conflict along both sides of the contact line and in the non-government controlled areas, addressing basic needs of those affected, wherever they are.

Mr. Chairperson, on 7 June, positioned near the contact line in government controlled Chyhari, the Mission heard two single shots followed by a burst of small-arms fire less than 100 meters east of its position. This happened despite security guarantees from both the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the armed formations. We strongly condemn any targeting of SMM monitors. Safe, secure and unhindered access for SMM monitors and their technical equipment must be ensured throughout Ukraine. This includes the Crimean peninsula and the area along the Ukrainian-Russian border to which Russia-backed armed formations repeatedly deny the SMM access.

There have been multiple cases of jamming during the reporting period of 4 to 10 June. We strongly urge the sides to immediately stop jamming and targeting SMM UAVs. On 5 June, the SMM observed the radio intelligence system TORN in non-government controlled Debaltseve. The next day an SMM UAV experienced jamming in the same area. We call on the Russian delegation to explain the presence in Debaltseve of this sophisticated technology, available in the Russian Federation's military arsenal but never in that of Ukraine, and why it is being used to target SMM UAVs. On 9 June in non-government controlled Ukrainke, an SMM long-range UAV spotted a surface-to-air missile system in violation of withdrawal lines. While in flight, two missiles were fired in the direction of the UAV. We strongly condemn these attacks on SMM equipment. The operational, security and financial consequences of these obstructions must be assessed and the parties responsible for any damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs should be held accountable, including politically and financially.

It has been over a year since Stanislav Aseev, a blogger and contributor to the Ukrainian Service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, was illegally detained by

Russian-backed armed formations. We echo the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Désir who on 1 June reiterated his urgent call for the journalist's release calling the detention abhorrent and intolerable. We remain equally concerned about Oleg Sentsov who is still on hunger strike. The European Union expects international human rights standards on the peninsula to be upheld and all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and on the Crimean peninsula to be released without delay. We also share the concerns expressed by the RFoM on the case of Roman Sushchenko, and join him in his call on Russian authorities to release this Ukrainian journalist.

The EU remains firm in its call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these must be restored. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility and to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full. We also call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to put an end to any restrictions hindering the SMM in carrying out its work according to its mandate. We again call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists, and we remain deeply concerned about information on the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in separatist-held areas. The duration of the European Union's economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to recognise these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it. The European Union will remain committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.