



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°895  
Vienna, 17 October 2018**

---

**EU Statement on the Security situation in and around Ukraine**

---

Madame Chairperson, on 10 October the lives of our monitors were once again put at risk. While monitoring the security situation at the Donetsk Filtration Station in order to facilitate repair works and the rotation of workers at the Station, three patrol members heard two bullets flying directly over their heads. This happened despite security guarantees having been provided. The European Union and its Member States strongly condemn this act and call on the sides to ensure the safety of the SMM monitors.

We condemn the ongoing restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement, occurring predominantly in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations. In the period of 1-7 October, in addition to restrictions posed by mines and unexploded ordnance, the SMM's freedom of movement was restricted 22 times - all in non-government-controlled areas. The Mission's access was again restricted in areas near the border with the Russian Federation in Sievernyi and Izvaryne. We continue to condemn all violations of the SMM mandate and recall that the SMM staff and their technical equipment must have safe, secure and unimpeded access throughout Ukraine. This includes the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and the entire stretch of Ukrainian-Russian border along Donbas, currently and temporarily outside of the control of the Ukrainian government. We are concerned over the reports of jamming and firing at the SMM UAVs. Any restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement as well as targeting and obstruction of the SMM's technical equipment are unacceptable and must stop.

We are deeply concerned by the increase in violence and the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons in the conflict zone, also in and around the disengagement pilot areas and close to SMM patrols, for instance on 12 October an SMM patrol

driving near non-government-controlled Pervomaïsk heard and saw an explosion approximately 300 m west of its location, assessed as the impact of an artillery round fired from a northerly direction. We deeply regret the severe negative consequences of the conflict on the civilian population living in the vicinity of the line of contact. During the week of 1-7 October the SMM corroborated reports of two civilian casualties and observed damage caused by shelling and gunfire in residential areas. We reiterate our call on all sides to disengage, withdraw heavy weapons and step up efforts on comprehensive mine action, in order to ensure a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire as an important step toward a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

Madame Chairperson, we reiterate our call to the Russian delegation to explain the presence in Ukraine of sophisticated Russian military equipment and note we have still not received an adequate answer. We note that in the middle of night on 10 October an SMM long-range UAV spotted a convoy of trucks in a non-government-controlled area of Donetsk region driving towards the border with the Russian Federation outside an official border crossing facility. Furthermore, the SMM had to recall the unmanned aerial vehicle due to multiple instances of GPS signal loss assessed as jamming. During the night of 11 October an SMM long-range UAV again spotted vehicles, including a truck carrying an armoured personnel carrier, entering and exiting Ukraine via an unpaved road in a non-government-controlled area of Donetsk region near the border with the Russian Federation where there are no border crossing facilities and without the consent of Ukrainian authorities. These incidents give rise to serious concerns regarding the nature of the cargo transported and demand an explanation by the Russian Federation.

The incidents on 10 and 11 October also underline the role of the SMM's technological equipment, including UAVs, in a situation where the Russian Federation continues to oppose a substantial expansion of the OSCE Border Observation Mission and where Russia-backed armed formations systematically deny the SMM access to certain areas of the international border not under government control.

We are concerned about the deteriorating situation in the Azov Sea including reports of interruptions to commercial shipping transiting through the Kerch Strait and from Ukraine's ports and the militarisation of the area. This situation is adding

to an already severe and volatile situation. We ask the SMM to monitor and report about the situation on the ground.

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 within its internationally recognised borders, and call 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 stabilise the situation and reverse 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 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, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA 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.