



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 788 Vienna, 13 May 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States reiterate our strong support for all diplomatic efforts, including in the Normandy format, aimed at achieving sustainable political solution to the crisis in and around Ukraine. Such a solution must be based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. In this context, we welcome the launch of the working groups under the Trilateral Contact Group on 6 May. This is an important step which offers a chance for a political process towards the full implementation of the Minsk agreements and decisive de-escalation of the situation on the ground.

At the same time, we express our deep concern about the surge of violence over the weekend as well as its spreading along the contact line beyond hotspot areas such as Donetsk airport and the village of Shyrokyne. Moreover, the hostilities continue to claim civilian and military lives and further deteriorate the dire humanitarian situation in some parts of eastern Ukraine.

Fighting must stop and all sides must strictly and comprehensively respect the ceasefire and fully uphold the SMM de-escalatory efforts. We expect Russia to exert its considerable influence over the separatists to this end.

We strongly condemn the incidents threatening the safety and security of the OSCE monitors, including the direct firing at SMM personnel on 10 May, and urge all parties to ensure full security and freedom of movement for the SMM. We also take note of the explanation and apology given by the local Ukrainian Armed Forces Commander related to the incident on 10 May and his commitment to ensure full security for the SMM.

We note as well with great concern the SMM reports about important concentration and movement of military hardware and forces, notably on the separatists' side of the contact line in and around Donetsk city and north-east of Mariupol. Despite claims that the withdrawal of heavy weapons was completed such weapons continue to be deployed and used by the parties within the exclusion zone, in particular Grad MLRS by the Russia-backed separatists. This is unacceptable.

The SMM should be provided without further delay with the requested baseline information that would pave the way for effective and independent fulfilment of its monitoring and verification tasks in accordance with the Minsk agreements. The SMM role remains crucial in ensuring the complete withdrawal of heavy weapons as well as sustainable and comprehensive ceasefire. This is why we strongly urge for safe,

unrestricted and unhindered SMM access to all parts of the conflict areas, including those controlled by the Russia-backed separatists.

Furthermore, foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries must be withdrawn from the territory of Ukraine as stipulated in the Minsk Package. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard. We remain deeply concerned about information of the build-up of Russian troops next to the Ukrainian border and in the illegally annexed Crimean Peninsula as well as of continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation.

We urge all signatories for the full implementation of all provisions of the Minsk agreements, including substantial and effective OSCE monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We recall that re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border with Russia remains of paramount importance. We underline the Russia's responsibility in this regard as well.

We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution of the conflict.

The European Union reiterates its commitment to fully implement its policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. We stand firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and call upon the Russian Federation to do likewise.

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 EFTA and the European Economic Area.