

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°816
Vienna, 20 April 2016**

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

The European Union and its Member States register with great concern the high level of ceasefire violations along the line of contact. On 14 April the number of ceasefire violations recorded by the SMM in the Donetsk region exceeded 4,000, with over 500 of them being explosions. The most acute deterioration was observed in the Avdiivka-Yasynuvata area. High numbers of these explosions were caused by proscribed weapons, which should have been withdrawn from the security zone. We urge immediate steps to de-escalate the situation and to consolidate the ceasefire and call on all sides to unconditionally and verifiably withdraw all Minsk-regulated weapons. These are necessary steps in order to move towards a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

We deplore the continuing practice of deliberate intimidation of the SMM monitors as well as considerable restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement, mostly in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government. Such actions are unacceptable and must stop immediately. Full implementation of the Minsk agreements requires that the SMM has full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border.

We regret that little progress has been noted with regard to mine action, as mines continue to present a clear danger to civilians. We regret in this context the JCCC's continued lack of impact on the ground in order to reach effective ceasefire arrangements to enable repair works.

We remain firm in our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments, in order to achieve a sustainable political settlement of the conflict, based on full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. 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. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential. We reiterate our concern regarding the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone.

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, 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.