



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°884 Vienna, 16 May 2018

EU Statement on the Security situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chairman, the EU and its Member States remain concerned by the volatile security situation along the line of contact - the sharp increase in ceasefire violations in Donetsk region on 9 May, as reported by the SMM, is particularly worrying. Positions near the contact line remain close, and the firing of weapons from and into residential areas continues to take a toll on civilians in the form of casualties and damage to properties. Mines and other explosive devices continue to pose another, serious threat to civilians living in the proximity of the line of contact and to those crossing the entry-exit checkpoints. We urge all sides to comply with the obligations they have signed up to. We call on all sides to step up efforts on demining in line with the Memorandum of 19 September 2014 and the TCG's Decision on Mine Action from 3 March 2016, as well as to disengage and to withdraw heavy weapons, especially from populated areas, in order to ensure successful ceasefire implementation.

Mr. Chairman, we strongly condemn the incident of 15 May in government-controlled area near Kamianka, about 1 km west of the contact line, where an SMM patrol came under small arms fire originating from a south-south-easterly direction while facilitating access for employees of the Donetsk Filtration Station. This is unacceptable. We deplore any restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement, as well as the continued targeting of SMM UAVs with small arms fire and signal jamming. In the week of 30 April - 6 May, the SMM continued to face impediments to its work again mostly in non-government controlled areas. In addition to restrictions posed by the presence of mines and UXOs, the SMM was restricted in its freedom of movement in 16 out of 20 instances in non-government controlled areas. This is unacceptable. We urge all sides to respect the SMM's mandate which calls for full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine including along the Ukrainian-Russian border and on the Crimean peninsula, and to halt all targeting and obstruction of their technical equipment. We continue to be concerned by SMM reports of

ceasefire violations in the areas around the Donetsk Filtration Station and other critical civilian infrastructure.

We reiterate our concerns over Russia's withdrawal from the JCCC and again call on the Russian Federation to return to the JCCC. We also call on Russia and Ukraine to re-establish the functionality of the JCCC and to strengthen cooperation within its framework.

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 UKRAINE, 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.