



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°871 Vienna, 13 December 2017

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

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1. The European Union and its Member States express once more their deep concern regarding the volatile security situation in eastern Ukraine. Increasing ceasefire violations, including greater usage of heavy weapons, is a cause of grave concern and we note that the number of explosions recorded by the SMM has reached levels last seen before the Harvest Recommitment to the Ceasefire. It is deeply regrettable that discussions, *inter alia*, in the Security Working Group of the TCG on the 5 December, have not translated into concrete and enduring actions on the ground. We call on all sides to disengage their forces and withdraw heavy weapons to verifiable storage areas, alongside exercising greater restraint in positioning forces near critical infrastructure.
2. We condemn the continued intimidation of and interference with SMM patrols, the majority of which continue to occur in areas outside of government control. This includes a recent occurrence of small arms fire from so-called "LPR" positions at a UAV, and denial of access to a hospital in Luhansk. The long-standing problems in accessing Siedove and Novoazovsk, and the more recent developments at Travneve, require greater efforts by the relevant parties to resolve, in order for the SMM to fulfil its mandate in all respects. We reiterate that the SMM and its technical equipment must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine.
3. The presence of mines and unexploded ordnance continue to be a significant restriction on the monitoring ability of the SMM and pose a deadly and indiscriminate threat to civilians. Some limited marking and de-mining activity has again been reported recently, however we urge all sides to do more to implement their commitments to correctly mark, fence and clear areas contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance. Greater efforts in this regard will, among other things, go

towards removing the standing limitations on the SMM's freedom of movement.

4. Madame Chairperson, on 23 November 2017, the 69<sup>th</sup> Russian Convoy entered Ukrainian territory at the Donetsk Border Crossing Point, as reported by the OSCE Observer Mission. We deeply regret that, once again, this happened without a full inspection by the Ukrainian border guards and in violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. This does little to allay concerns about the possible military nature of the transported cargo.
5. 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.
6. 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, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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