



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°827 Vienna, 27 July 2016

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States would like to start by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, and your able team, for the successful work and leadership as FSC Chair. We are grateful for the interesting topics you have put on the agenda of the security dialogues during your Chairmanship, including regional security issues, as well as for inviting inspiring guests to stimulate our discussions. We look forward to working with the incoming Portuguese Chairmanship after the summer recess.

Coming back to the security situation in and around Ukraine, the EU and its Member States remain deeply concerned by the volatile and unpredictable situation in eastern Ukraine. We remain disturbed by the sharp intensification of violence in Luhansk region, where the highest number of ceasefire violations since September 2015 was recorded last week. For the second consecutive week, intense fighting was noted mostly around the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, constituting 90% of the total number of ceasefire violations in the region. Concurrently with this spike in violence, the instances of restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement have increased significantly in this area, almost exclusively in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government. Out of 27 restrictions in the period 11 July – 17 July, 26 occurred in the separatists' controlled area and only one in government-controlled areas. We condemn any impediments to the SMM's work, including the most recent incidents involving SMM UAVs with a mini UAV coming under fire in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government as well as the crash of yet another long range UAV. Such incidents must be investigated and those responsible held accountable. We reiterate that any obstructions to the SMM's work represent a violation of the Minsk agreements and seriously limit the SMM's monitoring ability.

We once again urge all sides to strictly adhere to the ceasefire, immediately de-escalate and disengage, and unconditionally and verifiably withdraw all Minsk-regulated weapons. We underline that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We underline the role of the JCCC in this context and call on all sides to meaningfully engage to increase its effectiveness.

We call on all sides in the Trilateral Contact Group and its working groups to agree on steps toward the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. This includes further measures to enhance the security situation and agreeing on modalities of holding local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. We recall our firm position that established conditions for ODIHR monitoring, including ensuring security and access, must be met.

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, 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 and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA 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.