



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 795 Vienna, 9 September 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States welcome the most recent meetings and contacts within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group and its subordinate working groups. We hope that the talks will lead to tangible results soon. A sustainable cease-fire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons, including tanks and artillery under 100 mm, to be verified by SMM, are much needed. We regret that a final agreement on withdrawal is still unsecured.

We reiterate our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in good faith and in full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The cease-fire must be respected, heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We also expect Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full. We support all diplomatic efforts, including within the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format, aimed at achieving a sustainable political solution to the crisis. Such a solution must be based on OSCE principles and commitments, and in full respect of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

Following a worrying rise of incidents and increasing intensity of fighting in recent weeks, we welcome the significant reduction in cease-fire violations reported by the SMM. However, we remain deeply concerned about the volatile and unpredictable situation along the contact line, in particular in and around Donetsk and north-east of Mariupol where the SMM observed cease-fire violations. The continued presence and movement of military hardware and personnel in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as reported by the SMM, is of major concern, as it entails a continued risk for the return of a higher level of violence at any time. Furthermore, the presence of Russian troops next to the Ukrainian border and reports about continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation add to our concern.

We note that the SMM's UAVs have recently observed large concentrations of military hardware in separatist-controlled territory north-east of Mariupol. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory would be a gross violation of the Minsk agreements and seriously undermine all efforts to promote a sustainable political solution.

We strongly condemn all restrictions, threats and attacks on the SMM. The continuous jamming of SMM UAVs, particularly over separatist-controlled areas, is unacceptable and must stop. We are very concerned about the presence of the highly sophisticated military R-330ZH Zhitel jamming communication station in Donbass, as observed by the SMM and mentioned in the SMM daily reports of 15 August and 31 August. This modern jamming system, which is officially only in use by the Russian armed forces, allows, amongst others, the jamming of Global Positioning Systems.

We note with concern the loss of an SMM UAV over separatist controlled territory. Those in effective control of the area should immediately assist the SMM in retrieving the UAV. We call on all sides to ensure safe, full and unhindered access for SMM monitors and UAVs to all parts of Ukraine, including to the Crimean peninsula, those areas controlled by the separatists as well as along the border with Russia.

Furthermore, the SMM remains unable to fulfil its mandate and tasks due to security considerations and restrictions of its freedom of movement, especially in separatist-controlled areas. The SMM remains prevented from monitoring the significant portion of the border not under the control of the Ukrainian authorities which is one of its main activities under the Minsk agreements. We therefore urge all parties to ensure safe, full and unhindered access for the SMM including substantial and effective monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border and to provide it with the full baseline information that would allow for effective verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

We also recall that re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its entire state border with the Russian Federation remains of paramount importance.

We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continued to enter Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

Mr Chairman, 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 to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

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 country NORWAY, member 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 the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.