



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°840 Vienna, 14 December 2016

EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States remain concerned by the continuing violence and the volatile security situation in both the Donetsk and the Luhansk regions. Over the last two weeks, the situation remained unpredictable with ebbs and flows in ceasefire violations. Despite the relative easing of fighting in the Donetsk region over the past week, the recent relative calm in the Luhansk region has been disrupted by an almost threefold increase in ceasefire violations, compared with the previous reporting period. All along the contact line, the security situation remains tense and prone to periods of escalation, especially in the Donetsk airport area as well as east and north-east of Mariupol. We are extremely concerned about continued civilian casualties and infrastructure damage, which demonstrate that the local population bears the major burden of the conflict. We are also concerned about the stalemate in implementation of the Framework decision on disengagement in all three areas, and the stalled withdrawal process for heavy weaponry.

We regret that restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement, especially in the disengagement areas, continue to happen on a daily basis. The continuing failure to demine the respective areas is of particular concern and must be addressed. We once again underline that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, in particular to the disengagement areas and also along the Ukrainian-Russian State border. We stress the important role the JCCC has to play in ensuring the security of the SMM; the lack of a robust rapid response by the JCCC to this end is a matter of continued concern.

We urge the sides to fully adhere to the ceasefire, verifiably disengage and withdraw Minsk-proscribed weapons. These are necessary steps in order to ensure a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

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. The most recent OHCHR Human Rights Report on the Human Rights situation in Ukraine again confirmed the continued flow of weapons and ammunition to the conflict area. 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, 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.