



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1190
Vienna, 21 June 2018**

**EU Statement on “Russia’s Ongoing Aggression against
Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea”**

Mr. Chairperson, last week we once again called for an immediate stop to jamming and targeting of the SMM’s UAVs. We strongly condemned that missiles were fired from an area held by Russia-backed armed formations in the direction of a long range UAV on 9 June. On 15 June a long-range UAV was targeted from another non-government controlled area by a missile as well as by anti-aircraft gun fire. The SMM had clearly informed all sides about the flight in advance. We strongly condemn these attacks on SMM equipment and call on Russia to use the considerable influence it has over the armed formations that it backs to stop targeting the SMM UAVs. The operational, security and financial consequences of these obstructions must be assessed and the parties responsible for any damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs should be held accountable, including politically and financially.

The safety of our monitors remains of grave concern. Any shooting in their vicinity is unacceptable and we are alarmed that a patrol was once again exposed to warning shots in a non-government controlled area. In its weekly report of 19 June the SMM noted “an increased level of aggressive behavior towards SMM staff in non-government controlled areas”. On 14 June in non-government controlled Pikuzy, armed men in military-style clothing fired several warnings shots in the direction of an SMM patrol which forced the patrol to leave the area. These instances are all clear violations of the SMM mandate, which clearly states that the monitors and their technical equipment should have safe, secure and unhindered access throughout Ukraine. This includes the Crimean peninsula and the area along the Ukrainian-Russian border to which Russia-backed armed formations repeatedly deny the SMM access.

Mr. Chairperson, despite explicit security guarantees and repeated calls on the sides to protect critical civilian infrastructure, the SMM still has to facilitate access for Voda Donbassa water company employees to and from the DFS. While positioned in areas near the DFS, the SMM recorded continued ceasefire violations. The fighting puts the life of the workers and civilians at high risk and we urge the sides to immediately establish a safety zone around the DFS. We also repeat our call on the Russian Federation to return to the JCCC and on Russia and Ukraine to re-establish the functionality of the JCCC and to strengthen cooperation within its framework.

In light of ongoing discussions on political prisoners, the EU reiterates its concern on these cases, not least Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov, as was stated here last week. We call for all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and on the Crimean peninsula to be released without delay.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and calls 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 stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. On 18 June 2018, the EU extended the restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia until 23 June 2019. Four years on from the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, the EU reiterated that it will not recognise it and continues to condemn this violation of international law. The European Union rests committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures.

The EU remains firm in its call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these must be restored. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility and to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full. We also call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to put an end to any restrictions hindering the SMM in carrying out its work according to its mandate. We again call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists, and we remain deeply concerned

about information on the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in separatist-held areas. The duration of the European Union's economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN 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 and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.