



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 768 Vienna, 29 October 2014

EU Statement on Russian Unusual Military Activities and the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States welcome the holding on 26 October 2014 of parliamentary elections in Ukraine. This was a victory of the people of Ukraine and democracy. We reiterate the importance that the upcoming early local elections in Donbas later this year will be held under Ukrainian law and will serve the same goal of de-escalation and focusing on reforms through an inclusive dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and democratically elected representatives.

We take good note of the reduction in violence, including on the elections day, as a result of the ceasefire but regret and condemn the continued fighting in Eastern Ukraine during the past week where, according to SMM reports, separatist armed groups have been unsuccessfully attempting to take a number of key strategic areas under the control of the Ukrainian armed forces. We recall that strict observation of the ceasefire is indispensable for the much needed restoration of peace and stability in the East of Ukraine.

Furthermore, we expect all parties' full engagement and swift implementation of all commitments under the Minsk documents, which we see as a step towards a sustainable political solution of the crisis in and around Ukraine based on respect for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We underline the Russian Federation's responsibility in this context, and call for the withdrawal of illegal armed groups, military equipment, fighters and mercenaries, as well as for the securing of the Ukrainian-Russian state border with permanent monitoring under OSCE verification.

We are aware of the SMM concerns stemming from efforts by Joint Centre for Control and Coordination (JCCC) members to portray the Centre as an OSCE mission and reiterate that we consider such attempts unacceptable. In this context, we call on all

parties to allow SMM monitors to carry out their duties and to ensure free and safe access for them, including in all parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

We took due note of the report on bilateral Ukraine/Canada event to dispel concerns about unusual military activities and to provide clarity related to the regional security situation as well as of the information and remarks contained therein.

More broadly, we remind that abiding fully and in good faith by all OSCE politico-military commitments is crucial in order to achieve tangible and lasting de-escalation of the situation, thus underpinning a peaceful resolution of the crisis in and around Ukraine. Military transparency and a cooperative spirit should be maximised in order to dispel legitimate concerns and avoid miscalculations. All those concerned, and in particular the Russian Federation, should contribute to this end by, inter alia, hosting voluntary verification measures under the Vienna Document, exercising restraint in carrying out military activities and exercises in the bordering areas with Ukraine, as well as sharing information about on-going and planned military activities and exercises in these areas via the OSCE communication channels.

The European Union reiterates its strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and will not recognise it. The European Union stands firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and calls upon the Russian Federation to do likewise.

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 EFTA and the European Economic Area.