



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States express once more their deep concern regarding the volatile security situation in eastern Ukraine. Whilst there was a considerable decrease in ceasefire violations and the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons over the period from 12 - 25 June, we regret to see that the security situation on the ground is again highly volatile. As noted by Principal Deputy Chief Monitor Hug, while weapons remain in place and sides are in close proximity, escalation remains an ever-present threat. We note with regret that the proposed "Harvest Ceasefire" has not taken hold. We urge all sides to take immediate steps to ensure full respect of the ceasefire, the withdrawal of all Minsk-proscribed weapons and complete disengagement. We deplore the continuing lack of progress regarding disengagement and recurrent appearance of newly built trenches and weapons in violation of their respective withdrawal lines, as observed by the SMM.

We welcome the opening of the Forward Patrol Base in Popasna which will further enhance the SMM's monitoring capability. However, we regret that on the morning of 30 June, the SMM was forced to temporarily evacuate from the Base in Popasna after extensive shelling overnight. Without proper and unrestricted monitoring by the SMM, there cannot be a verified improvement of the security situation.

We repeat our condemnation of the continuing intimidation, threats and restrictions faced by the SMM monitors, primarily in non-government controlled areas. We condemn the recent incidents in Yasynuvata, where an armed man shot at and attacked an SMM patrol on 20 June, and near Zolote, where small-arms fire and explosions occurred close to SMM personnel on 23 June. Such actions, including threatening to shoot patrol members, as happened on 29 June in separatist-held Vesela Hora, or attempting to discredit the SMM through the media, create an

environment of impunity and encourages further attacks if there is not an adequate response. It is high time that those responsible are brought to justice.

We expect the JCCC to respond rapidly and effectively when called upon by the SMM to address such impediments facing the Mission. In this context, we note the re-establishment of security arrangements at the SMM office in Donetsk City and call on the JCCC to maintain their presence as long as requested by the SMM. We welcome attempts by the SMM to facilitate local ceasefires through the JCCC to allow the repair of critical civilian infrastructure. We reiterate once again that the SMM and its technical equipment must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine and we urge Russia to exercise its influence over the separatists it backs to ensure the SMM's safe access and to prevent such impediments.

Mr Chairman, we are deeply concerned regarding the lack of substantive mine action and the observation of newly laid mines. This not only constitutes a significant restriction on the monitoring ability of the SMM, but continues to pose a grave and indiscriminate threat to civilians. We expect all sides to implement their commitments to mark, fence and clear areas contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance, and we once again underline the need for the JCCC to fulfil its coordination role as laid out in the TCG decision on mine clearance.

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 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.