



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 804 Vienna, 18 November 2015

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#### EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

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Mr. Chairman, the European Union and its Member States are concerned about the reports regarding the numerous ceasefire violations recorded by the SMM, as well as the relatively tense general situation in eastern Ukraine. This reminds us that the situation on the ground remains fragile and enhanced efforts are needed to ensure sustainability of the ceasefire. This must be accompanied by further steps to implement fully the Minsk agreements, in order to achieve a sustainable settlement of the conflict, based on full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

We welcome progress in implementing the withdrawal of smaller calibre weapons as foreseen by the Addendum including written notifications of completion of withdrawal of mortars provided so far. We urge all sides, particularly the Russia-backed separatists, to abide by the withdrawal agreement fully and without delay. At the same time, we urge full and unconditional withdrawal of heavy weapons in accordance with the Minsk Package of Measures. We support SMM's introduction of clearer and more effective verification requirements applied as of 9 November and urge all sides to provide the SMM with the requested information. We reiterate our concern about the presence and movement of heavy weapons in violation of the withdrawal lines and concentration beyond them, in particular in separatist controlled areas. All heavy weapons must be withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and call on Russia to use its considerable influence over separatists to meet their commitments.

We have repeatedly asked the Russian Federation to clarify the presence in the separatist-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine of a Zhytel jamming communication station, directly affecting SMM operations, and the multi launch rocket system TOS-1 Buratino. We regret to note that no satisfactory explanation has been provided to this end. This lack of clarification as well as SMM reporting do nothing to allay concerns about the continued presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in separatist-controlled areas.

We underline again, that the SMM must be granted full, safe and unrestricted access throughout Ukraine. Freedom of movement for the SMM monitors as well as UAVs, including unhindered access to the border areas controlled by separatists, is indispensable to the SMM to be able fully perform its role as foreseen by the Minsk Agreements and to implement its mandate.

We follow with concern SMM's reports about mine-related incidents including civilian and military casualties as well as the danger mines and unexploded ordnance continue to represent for the security of OSCE monitors. We therefore reiterate our call on the security working group of the TCG to agree to a framework for mine action, to be able to step-up demining efforts without further delay.

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