



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1067 Vienna, 10 September 2015

EU Statement on Russia's Ongoing Aggression against Ukraine and Violations of OSCE principles and Commitments

The European Union welcomes the significant reduction in ceasefire violations as reported by the Special Monitoring Mission. We hope that the relative calm in recent days constitutes progress towards a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire and we urge all sides to consolidate it.

To this end, an agreement on the withdrawal of tanks and artillery under 100 mm, to be verified by the SMM, is much needed. We call for an agreement without further delay in order to solve this outstanding issue. Furthermore, we underline the need for an effective verification regime which would allow the SMM to independently verify the withdrawal of heavy weapons as well as tanks and artillery under 100 mm from the respective exclusion zones. We welcome the most recent meetings and contacts within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE Chairmanship and its subordinate working groups. We reiterate our support for the efforts of the Normandy format in facilitating the full implementation of the Minsk agreements with full respect for OSCE principles and commitments. We also reiterate our strong support to the work of the Trilateral Contact Group, which must continue to play an essential role in the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Mr Chairman, we repeat our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full respect of Ukraine's territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty. The ceasefire must be fully respected, the existing agreement on withdrawal of heavy weapons must be implemented and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. In this

context, we follow with concern reports of the OSCE Observer mission at the Donetsk and Gukovo checkpoints about transfer of military 'Cargo 200' from Ukraine to Russia. We also expect Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full.

The SMM can only perform its vital role, including in verifying any new withdrawal of weapons, if it has free and safe access to the whole territory of Ukraine, including to the Crimean peninsula and along the border with Russia. It is unacceptable that the mission continues to face significant restrictions in its monitoring activities, in particular in large swaths of separatist-controlled territory, also taking into account the significant decrease of ceasefire violations. The jamming of SMM UAVs, predominantly over separatist-controlled areas and direct attacks on them is unacceptable and must stop. We are concerned about the loss of a UAV over separatist controlled territory which was, most probably, shot down, and we call again upon those in effective control of the area to immediately assist the SMM in retrieving the UAV. We would be grateful if the delegation of the Russian Federation could explain the presence of the highly sophisticated military R-330ZH Zhitel jamming communication station in Donbass, as observed by the SMM and mentioned in the SMM daily reports of 15 August and 31 August, which is officially only used by the Russian armed forces. In this context, we are concerned about reports on the continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation. We also note with great concern the increasing risk posed by mines and unexploded ordnances to SMM personnel.

We welcome the latest report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Ukraine. We are also deeply concerned by the assessment of the OHCHR that people continue to reside in separatist-controlled areas without protection from the human rights violations and abuses of the armed groups and their supporters. We share the concern of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights that human rights violations continue to be committed in the illegally annexed Crimea and Sevastopol. Dissenting voices in Crimea, particularly among the Crimean Tatars, continue to be effectively silenced and denied any public space. We call on all sides to heed the recommendations put forth by the OHCHR in the report.

The OHCHR report also serves as a reminder that the conflict continues to have a tragic humanitarian impact. Humanitarian actors continue to lack full and safe access, in particular to people in need in separatist-controlled areas. The Minsk package foresees that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. Timely, safe and unhindered access remains of utmost importance, and agreement on this in the humanitarian working group is crucial. We welcome the opening of a first humanitarian and logistic centre in government-controlled territory north of Donetsk near the contact line.

Mr Chairman, the EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, 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 stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

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 the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.