



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council N°1088  
Vienna, 4 February 2016**

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**EU Statement on Russia's Ongoing Aggression against  
Ukraine and Violation of OSCE Principles and Commitments**

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Ceasefire violations remain a deeply regretful part of the daily life in eastern Ukraine, resulting in further casualties and continued humanitarian strife. We are concerned by the recent sharp increase in the number of ceasefire violations in various places in the Donetsk region, as reported by the SMM. The crisis in and around Ukraine has claimed the lives of more than 9,000 people, injured more than 20,000 and displaced at least 1.5 million within Ukraine. These numbers are tragic. To prevent them from rising any higher, the first and most important step is a full and sustained ceasefire. The European Union therefore calls on all sides to take immediate action to consolidate the ceasefire and move towards a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE commitments and principles.

We are concerned about the continuing concentration of forces and high numbers of weapons observed by the SMM around hotspots in the conflict zone. We reiterate our call on all sides to fully and verifiably withdraw all heavy weapons in line with the Minsk Package of Measures and the Addendum. All outstanding baseline information should be provided to the SMM. All intimidation of SMM monitors must stop at once, as must all restrictions on the SMM's UAVs' and monitors' freedom of movement, including along the Ukrainian-Russian State border. As stated by the Chief Monitor, and despite repeated assurances of full cooperation, the overwhelming majority of restrictions of the SMM's freedom of movement occur in separatist-held areas. We regret that recently a UAV could not be launched due to impediments by the separatists. Full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine is crucial for the SMM to fulfil its mandate. This can be ensured only with a full engagement of all actors on the ground, including the JCCC.

The humanitarian situation remains dire, particularly in separatist-held areas. We welcome the announcement by the Ukrainian government to open another checkpoint at the line of contact on 12 February. The number of people crossing the line of contact increased by almost 30% in December, according to Ukrainian official statistics and as reported by UNOCHA, and further steps to simplify the procedures for people to cross the line of contact are needed to help minimise undue hardship for civilians. We also call on all sides to ensure the necessary security at the checkpoints needed to keep them open. We continue to deeply regret the severe restrictions imposed by separatists in parts of the Donetsk region on humanitarian access, obstructing urgently needed humanitarian assistance. We are concerned about reports of harassment and intimidation of local volunteers involved in aid delivery. We again call on the separatists to remove these obstacles in line with humanitarian principles.

We continue to urge the sides in the Political Working Group to agree on the modalities of local elections in certain parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, relevant OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. Established conditions for ODIHR observation must be met, including ensuring security and access for ODIHR.

The European Union welcomes that Ukraine has put a reform process into place in difficult circumstances and expresses its strong expectation that reforms will continue, in particular those related to the justice sector, public administration, decentralisation and the fight against corruption.

The European Union remains firm in its call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and also yet again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet their commitments. We recall that the duration of the EU economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. Foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries must be removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential. We reiterate our concern about reports regarding the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia.

Mr Chair, the European Union 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, to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilise the situation and to 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\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries NORWAY and LIECHTENSTEIN, 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.