



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1192
Vienna, 12 July 2018**

**EU Statement on “Russia’s Ongoing Aggression against
Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea”**

Mr. Chairperson, we regret that the harvest ceasefire of 1 July has not brought about the much needed respite for civilians that had been hoped for. The number of ceasefire violations has gone down but fighting has not stopped, the sides are not disengaging and residential areas are also not spared. On 5 July in non-government controlled Yasynuvata, where the SMM on 28 June had observed new trenches, the SMM heard and saw explosions, shots of heavy-machine-gun and small-arms fire. On the same day, the SMM observed fresh damage from gunfire in a residential area of Yasynuvata. The woman living in the house said that she had been at home with her three children on the evening of 4 July, when the bullet had hit the house. We strongly deplore that civilians cannot be safe even inside their own homes and urge the sides to respect the harvest ceasefire as they have committed to do. This implies full disengagement and withdrawal of heavy weapons.

There continues to be a risk that fighting near critical civilian infrastructure could lead to a humanitarian and ecological disaster. We have repeatedly spoken out about the risks surrounding the Donetsk Filtration Station and we remain deeply concerned about the situation there where ceasefire violations persist. We are also seeing reports warning that water companies in Ukraine risk running out of chlorine which is a key element to treat water. In addition, Deputy Chief Monitor Alexander Hug last week warned that heavy weapons and fighting in the close proximity of a Phenol sludge pond on the contact line prevented essential repair. A leak from the pond would be disastrous for the environment and the population. At the same time, the SMM works tirelessly to repair and maintain the fiber cables supporting the mobile networks in eastern Ukraine but regrettably, their work is often undone

instantly by renewed fighting. Since 1 January 2018, the SMM has facilitated repair works to 41 infrastructure objects and monitored adherence to localized ceasefire facilitating 377 “windows of silence”. Keeping in mind the role played by the JCCC also related to infrastructure repair, we repeat our call on the Russian Federation to return to the JCCC and on Russia and Ukraine to re-establish the functionality of the JCCC and to strengthen cooperation within its framework.

We strongly condemn any attack on SMM technical equipment, as should all participating states. We have in this forum repeatedly called for an immediate stop to jamming and targeting of the SMM's UAVs but they continue to be targeted or jammed on an almost daily basis. For instance, on 2 July a long range UAV was jammed while flying over Zholobok; on 4 July a UAV was targeted by 15 shots of small-arms fire near Zhovte; on 6 July a UAV was targeted with 12 shots of small-arms fire in Vesele in Donetsk region. All of these incidents took place in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations and we urge Russia to exercise its influence over the armed formations to put an end to the restrictions. We repeat that the operational, security and financial consequences of these obstructions must be assessed and the parties responsible for any damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs should be held accountable, including politically and financially. The SMM mandate states clearly that the SMM including its technical equipment should be granted safe, secure, unconditional and unimpeded access, including along the Ukrainian-Russian border and the Crimean peninsula. The SMM operates in an extremely challenging context and we commend it for the factual information it provides every day to all participating States.

We remain deeply concerned about the human rights situation in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We are deeply concerned about the deteriorating health and welfare of Oleg Sentsov, Voldomyr Balukh and Emir Hussein Kuku. They are all three currently in Russian detention simply due to their opposition to the illegal annexation of Crimea and remain on hunger strike. On 5 July 2018, Volodymyr Balukh, who has opposed the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula, was sentenced to five years in prison by courts in illegally annexed Crimea. The EU does not recognise their jurisdiction and condemn this breach of international law and elementary standards of justice. The case is adding to the extremely worrying number of Crimean Tatars who have been persecuted and had

their rights gravely violated. It is unacceptable that international human rights monitoring organisations and Ukrainian authorities have been denied access to visit them. The European Union expects international human rights standards on the peninsula to be upheld and all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and on the Crimean peninsula to be released without delay.

The EU remains firm in its call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these must be restored. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility in this regard and to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full. We again call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists, and we remain deeply concerned about information on the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in separatist-held areas. The duration of the European Union's economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, 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 stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. The European Union will remain committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.