



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 801 Vienna, 28 October 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chair, the European Union and its Member States remain cautiously optimistic, as the ceasefire is largely holding and the security situation remains relatively calm. However, sporadic incidents remind us that the situation on the ground continues to be fragile. We urge all parties to make full use of the opportunity created by the decrease in violence to move towards a sustainable political settlement of the conflict based on full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

We are encouraged that withdrawal of smaller calibre weapons as foreseen by the Addendum to the Package of measures continues and that the SMM has been enabled to conduct verification visits to the weapon storage sites. In this context, we once again underline the need for the SMM to receive all necessary baseline information as well as unlimited access to all weapon storage sites and adjacent areas without any delay in order to be able to fully verify the withdrawal.

This should be accompanied without any further delay by the full and unconditional withdrawal of all heavy weapons in accordance with the Package of Measures and subject to SMM verification. We reiterate our concern about the continued presence of heavy weapons in violation of withdrawal lines, particularly in separatist-controlled areas, as reported by the SMM. We underline the urgent need for a swift agreement on concrete, immediate steps to this end within the TCG and its subgroup on security issues. We also repeat our concern about the concentration of military hardware beyond the respective withdrawal lines, particularly in separatist-controlled areas, and the risk this entails for the security situation on the ground.

We regret to learn from the SMM reports that despite some progress the SMM monitors still face significant restriction and UAVs continue to be jammed, particularly in separatist-held areas. This is unacceptable. We reiterate once again that the SMM must be granted free and unhindered access to all areas including along the state border with Russia.

Reports about civilian casualties highlight the deadly threat emanating from mines and unexploded ordnance. We underline the responsibility of the sides to step up demining efforts. To this end, we underline the urgent need to reach an agreement on a co-ordinated approach to demining as well as on the plan for disengagement in Shyrokyne within the security working group of the TCG. We commend the facilitating and confidence building role the SMM continues to play in this regard.

We remain firm in our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and to honour their commitments in full. The ceasefire must be respected in full, all heavy weapons withdrawn from the security zone and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We recall our concern about continued presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in separatist-controlled areas. We take note of the comments provided by the delegation of the Russian Federation last week regarding the heavy multiple launch rocket system TOS-1 Buratino. However these did not clarify in full the presence of the TOS-1 Buratino on the Ukrainian territory controlled by separatists. Also, we would like to recall that our repeated questions about the presence of a Zhitel jamming communication station in separatist-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine remain unanswered so far.

We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continued 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 fundamental 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*, 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.