



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council N°1078 Vienna, 19 November 2015

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

The European Union is concerned by the recent significant rise in ceasefire violations causing further casualties. Concrete steps are urgently needed to halt and reverse this deterioration, consolidate the ceasefire and move towards a sustainable political settlement in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

To this end, we are concerned that the increase in violence will undermine progress achieved in the implementation of the withdrawal agreement of 29 September. Moreover, it is unacceptable that the SMM has still not received the necessary information under the verification requirements recently introduced by the SMM. We reiterate our call on all sides to unconditionally and verifiably withdraw heavy weapons in line with the Minsk Package of Measures.

Unacceptable and significant restrictions in large swaths of separatist-held areas continue to impede SMM UAVs and the work of SMM monitors, including along the state border with Russia. Full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine is crucial for the SMM to fulfil its mandate. We once again urge the Russia-backed separatists to cooperate fully and without delay in setting up all planned SMM Forward Patrol Bases in separatist-held parts of Donetsk.

We deeply regret the recent rise in incidents involving mines and unexploded ordnance as reported by SMM. This underlines the urgency of reaching a framework agreement on mine action in the Security Working Group. The European Union will look into the possibility to increase its current support to mine action in Ukraine.

We welcome the second round of local elections held in 29 cities in Ukraine on 15 November and note the ODIHR's preliminary findings and conclusions. We look forward to the conduct of the planned remaining local elections on 29 November, 20 and 27 December and encourage the Ukrainian authorities to act on the recommendations in the final report to be produced by OSCE/ODIHR.

We again call on the sides in the Political Working Group to work towards agreement on the modalities of local elections in certain parts of Donetsk and Luhansk in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, relevant OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. It is important that the established conditions for ODIHR's election observation are met, including ensuring security and access for ODIHR.

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 again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists 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. The ceasefire must be respected. 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 reiterate our concern about reports regarding the continued presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia, including the presence of a Zhytel jamming communication station and a TOS-1 Buratino in separatist-held areas.

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 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.