



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°835 Vienna, 16 November 2016

EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States are deeply concerned by the high level of fighting over the last two weeks which has returned to levels last recorded in August. With over 2,000 daily explosions, the situation in Donbas is deteriorating. The increased use of Minsk-proscribed weapons, including multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) is of particular concern, as the use of such weaponry threatens a considerable escalation in violence due to its longer firing range and higher-calibre explosive warheads. The escalation in fighting has taken place against the background of stagnating efforts to advance disengagement in the three initially agreed areas, as well as increased restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement. We urge the sides to fully adhere to the ceasefire, verifiably disengage and withdraw Minsk-proscribed weapons in order to achieve concrete progress on the ground so that the negative trend of the last few weeks can be reversed. These are necessary steps in order to ensure a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

We strongly condemn any violence against unarmed SMM monitors, such as the most recent incident of 9 November in the separatist-controlled village of Verkhnohyrokiyske. Two SMM patrols were exposed to shelling and faced obstructions in their attempt to leave the area due to a large truck blocking the road. This is unacceptable. Such incidents must stop immediately and the perpetrators must be held accountable. We underline the important role of the JCCC to assist in ensuring the security of the SMM. The lack of a robust rapid response by the JCCC to this end is a matter of concern. We underline that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, in particular to the disengagement areas and also along the Ukrainian-Russian State border.

We call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet these commitments in full. We reiterate our deep concern regarding information about the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone. We call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn. All foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries must be removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential.

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* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, 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.