



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1060 Vienna, 18 June 2015

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

The European Union remains deeply concerned about the ongoing ceasefire violations around Donetsk airport and in other parts of eastern Ukraine. The SMM's reports on the return and growing presence of heavy weapons in locations on both sides of the line of contact add to our concern. This notably includes the recent observation of more than 50 battle tanks in a separatist-controlled area by an SMM UAV. This was the highest number recorded so far in one place. The increasing presence of heavy weapons is a violation of the Minsk agreements. Any attempts by the separatists to gain control of additional territory will be a gross violation of the Minsk agreements and seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political solution. The European Union reiterates its call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments, and underlines the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We recall that all hostages and illegally detained persons should be released in line with the Minsk agreements, including Nadiya Savchenko and other illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula.

We welcome the fact that the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, Russia, and the OSCE Chairmanship has met as planned in Minsk this Tuesday after the meetings of its working groups. The Trilateral Contact Group must continue its work in its current format, with participants fully engaged, in good faith and in a constructive spirit. The Trilateral Contact Group is and must remain the driving force behind the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Three of the four working groups under the auspices of the Trilateral Contact Group have met on Tuesday. All working groups must work very hard indeed to ensure progress is made. Each of the four areas that they cover is essential to the

implementation of the Minsk agreements. And let us not forget that all of the issues being discussed are of direct importance to the well-being of the civilian population.

- a. On security, measures for de-escalation remains an essential priority, including ensuring full respect for the ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons. The provision of baseline data to the SMM would be a useful step in this regard. Ensuring safe, full and unhindered access for the SMM must be a priority. Progress is also needed on securing local ceasefires, such as in Shyrokyne.
- b. On political affairs, we stress the importance of the holding of local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and relevant OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. We note from the report on ODIHR's recent security assessment mission that separatist restrictions on access prevented ODIHR from assessing if the security environment permits any observation activities. This is simply unacceptable. ODIHR must be granted full and unrestricted access, as well as security guarantees.
- c. On IDPs and refugees and humanitarian assistance, agreement on an international mechanism to ensure safe access, delivery, storage, and distribution of humanitarian assistance, as agreed in Minsk, remains crucial. There is no better way to convince us that the so-called 'humanitarian' assistance from Russia is genuine. We would like to ask our Russian colleagues to confirm that they are indeed ready to discuss this issue in the working group under the Trilateral Contact Group.
- d. Finally, we hope that the working group on economic affairs and rehabilitation, when it meets next week, will find an agreement on the concrete proposals under discussion.

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 once again urge Russia to recognise by acts these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times, to contribute 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*, 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.