



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1070 Vienna, 8 October 2015

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

Mr. Chairman, the European Union welcomes the agreements of the 'Normandy four' leaders in Paris on 2 October on the continued implementation of the Minsk agreements, especially in particular on the withdrawal of weapons and its verification, the access for SMM to all parts of the conflict zone, an enhanced access for humanitarian assistance as well as on the political process. Furthermore, the announcement on the 6th of October in the Political Working Group under the Trilateral Contact Group, that the previously announced plans for so-called elections have been called off following the agreement reached in the Normandy Summit, will allow for the preparation of proper conditions for holding local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation relevant OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. Due compliance will represent a fundamental step towards full implementation of the Minsk agreements in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Together with the agreement reached on 29 September on the withdrawal of tanks, artillery under 100mm and mortars up to 120mm, this announcement offers renewed hope for a sustainable political settlement of the conflict, based on full respect for international law and Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

We welcome steps taken to begin the withdrawal process and to provide the SMM with some baseline information in order to take necessary verification measures. This should be accompanied without delay by the full and unconditional withdrawal of all heavy weapons in accordance with the Minsk Package of Measures, which will also have to be verified by the SMM. This would not only contribute to the sustainability of the ceasefire, which has been largely holding since 1 September despite the fragile

security situation, but also constitute an important step towards the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We strongly support efforts to increase the capacity of the SMM and we reiterate that its mandate covers the whole of Ukraine, including the Crimean peninsula. In order to fulfil its mandate, however, it is essential that the SMM is granted free and safe access to all areas and weapon storage points and receives all necessary baseline information. Despite some progress, the SMM monitors and UAVs still face significant restrictions in their monitoring activities, particularly in separatist-held areas and here especially in the areas close to the border with Russia. This is unacceptable. We highlight the continued jamming of the SMM UAVs and we express concern over the presence of a Russian R330ZH Zhytel jamming communication station in the separatist-controlled area.

The suspension of almost all humanitarian programs in separatist-held areas obstructs vital assistance. We welcome the agreement reached in Paris on 2 October to increase the number of crossing points and to restore and improve access for international aid agencies. We call on the Humanitarian Working Group to quickly use this momentum to agree on concrete steps to ensure full humanitarian access to people in the affected areas.

We remain firm in our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and to honour their commitments in full. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. The ceasefire must be respected in full, all heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. We recall our concern about reports regarding continued presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in separatist-controlled areas. In this context, we are distressed by reports from the SMM on the concentration of tanks and multiple rocket systems in separatist-held areas, including a TOS-1 Buratino system, as reported by SMM. The duration of the EU economic sanctions is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border remains essential. We again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full.

Mr Chairman, the EU 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 LIECHTENSTEIN 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.