



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Special Permanent Council No. 1016
Vienna, 8 September 2014**

**EU Statement in Response to UN Under-Secretary-General
for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman and UN Assistant
Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović**

Mr Under-Secretary-General, Mr Assistant Secretary-General, on behalf of the European Union it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Permanent Council today. We are grateful for your presentations and highly appreciate this opportunity to exchange views on international security challenges and avenues for further cooperation in addressing them. We welcome you personally and the United Nations also as a close friend and partner to the European Union.

The UN and the OSCE have a long record of successful cooperation. At the same time, we believe there is scope for further cooperation, not only to avoid duplication and competition on the ground, but also to improve strategic interaction, particularly in the area of conflict resolution and prevention. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE has a key role to play in addressing local disputes in the OSCE space, an area that unfortunately remains home to several unresolved conflicts. Achieving tangible progress in the resolution of the protracted conflicts in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, and of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is an urgent task requiring our constant attention.

The crisis in and around Ukraine has tremendous consequences for the entire OSCE region and beyond. In this context, we welcome the agreement on a ceasefire reached in Minsk on 5 September. We hope that this will be a first step towards a sustainable political solution, based on respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We note with concern that the ceasefire was violated a number of times over the weekend as reported by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and other sources. We call on all sides to respect and fully implement the ceasefire.

Before the beginning of the ceasefire we were witness to increasing flows of fighters and heavy weapons from the territory of the Russian Federation into eastern Ukraine as well as the aggressive acts by Russian armed forces on sovereign Ukrainian territory in clear breach of international law, OSCE commitments and the UN charter. We have condemned these acts and call again on Russia to stop the supply of armour, weapons, and fighters across the border and to remove its personnel and equipment from Ukraine. Likewise, we continue to strongly condemn the illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it. We recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and call upon Russia to do likewise. We also recall the decision by the European Council on 30 August to enhance the EU's restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising eastern Ukraine and the preparatory work undertaken to this end.

Permanent monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian border and withdrawal of illegal armed groups and Russian forces illegally operating on Ukrainian territory should be integral parts of a sustainable political solution. The EU stands ready to support any efforts related to the implementation of the ceasefire, including through the OSCE. We welcome the announcement by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office that the Special Monitoring Mission will now significantly expand, adapt to changing needs and recruit more specialists.

Events in Ukraine have highlighted the importance of the OSCE and the UN and of the two organisations working together with the common aim of supporting Ukraine. We highly valued Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović's joint presentation with the Heads of the OSCE autonomous institutions on the human rights and minority situation in Ukraine on 19 May. In the field, cooperation is ongoing between the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission and with the UNHCR. The joint statements by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and other international freedom rapporteurs, most recently on the importance of ensuring safety of journalists in crisis areas, constitute another good example of practical cooperation. Here in the Permanent Council we had the pleasure of having

former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navi Pillay, as our guest on 3 July where we, among other issues, had a thorough discussion on Ukraine.

We appreciate the independent and objective reporting about facts on the ground in Ukraine that UN and OSCE structures are providing to the international community. These reports are of great importance. We note that they are consistent in their description of events. For instance, we note from these reports that the human rights violations did not precede but rather accompanied and followed the emergence of various armed pro-Russian separatist groups in eastern Ukraine and Crimea. We also note that it is the activities of these groups that are the root cause of the serious human suffering and human rights violations experienced by the civilian population as highlighted in today's statement by Mr Šimonović.

We commend both the OSCE and the UN for their response to the crisis and encourage them to continue supporting the Ukrainian government. We welcome in particular the continued engagement of the UN Secretary General on Ukraine in defence of the principles and spirit of the UN Charter. However, we also note that the past few months have made it abundantly clear that the OSCE as well as the UN can only deliver if there is sufficient political will on all sides to fully use their tools and structures.

Mr Under-Secretary-General, Mr Assistant Secretary-General, your appearance here at the Permanent Council evidently comes at an important moment. The aggressive acts by Russian armed forces on sovereign Ukrainian territory have seriously challenged the fundamental principles and commitments that underpin both the UN and the OSCE. What is at stake are the established fundamental principles that have provided a solid cornerstone for the European security order and cooperation between states. This is the larger issue we also need to address as we move forward.

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 country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.