



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°935 Vienna, 11 December 2019

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#### EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

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Mr. Chairperson, the EU and its Member States welcome the holding of the Normandy Four Summit in Paris on 9 December. We thank France for the organisation of this Summit and we also highly commend consistent efforts by France and Germany to facilitate peaceful resolution of this conflict.

The fact that the negotiations are occurring at this level after an interval of three years is an encouraging sign and an important step towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict, in full respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine. We sincerely hope that deeds will now follow the words.

We welcome the commitments undertaken at the Summit and urge the sides to implement them in good faith. We reaffirm our support to the TCG and we highlight the important role it will play in further implementation of those commitments. The EU recalls in this context the constructive approach displayed by Ukraine and calls on Russia to act likewise, as well as to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs.

We welcome the intention to achieve a full, unlimited and comprehensive ceasefire by the end of this year. Such a ceasefire is long overdue. In the last few weeks and months we saw a volatile security situation on the ground, with ceasefire violations persisting, taking its human toll among military personnel and civilian population. This had severe consequences for the civilian population living near the contact line. We hope that this new commitment will be fully and faithfully implemented and thus would finally put an end to the violence and ease human suffering.

Following the recent progress in Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske, we strongly support the idea of designating three additional areas in which to implement

disengagement of forces and military equipment by the end of March 2020. We are also encouraged by the intention to identify, within a month, new crossing points along the contact line and to achieve the release and exchange of conflict-related detainees, based on the principle of “all for all”, starting with “all identified for all identified” and we welcome the fact that the sides reaffirmed the necessity to grant the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) full and unconditional access to all detained persons.

As a staunch supporter of the SMM, we welcome the support of the Normandy Four for safe and secure access of the SMM throughout Ukraine, with a view to the implementation of its mandate to the full extent. We recall our position that any impediments to the SMM’s work, including attempts to destroy SMM's assets, are unacceptable.

The SMM remains our source of reliable information of the situation on the ground. We highly value its regular and thematic reports. Today we wish to thank the SMM for its latest thematic report, dated 4 December 2019, on the impact of mines and UXO on the civilian population in the conflict area. The report clearly demonstrates the harmful effects of the many mines, unexploded ordnance and other explosive objects on civilians. They were the cause of one third of the confirmed civilian casualties during the reporting period, i.e. since January 2018. What is more worrying and appalling is the fact that many of the victims are children, killed or injured from explosive objects found in gardens or fields while playing.

In this context, we want to express our appreciation to all, including the Ukrainian authorities, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, the SMM and numerous NGOs, for their efforts aimed at raising awareness of the risk of mines and UXO, in particular through mine risk education programmes at schools near the contact line, as well as for the demining activities the Ukrainian authorities undertake. In this context, we welcome the announcement at the Normandy Four Summit in Paris of the development and implementation by the sides of an updated demining plan, on the basis of the TCG decision of 3 March 2016.

We regret that Russia continues with so-called "humanitarian convoys", lately on a weekly basis, some of which are entering military compounds, in clear violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as of fundamental international humanitarian principles. We once again call on Russia to join an international

mechanism for the delivery of humanitarian aid and to desist from its current practice, which is incompatible with basic principles of international law.

We remain firm in our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution to the conflict in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these principles and commitments must be restored. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations 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 armed formations. 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 within its internationally recognised borders and call upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to recognise these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. We continue to call on Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov in accordance with international law. We express our deep concern about the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia, which continues to impact the security situation in the Black Sea region and beyond.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.