



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 802 Vienna, 4 November 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States continue to draw a measure of cautious optimism from the relative calm along the contact line. However, even though the ceasefire is largely holding, incidents with casualties remind us that the situation on the ground remains fragile. We urge all parties to make full use of the opportunity created by the relative calm to move towards a sustainable political settlement of the conflict based on full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

We welcome the progress in implementing the withdrawal of smaller calibre weapons as foreseen by the Addendum, including verification by the SMM. However, we are concerned about SMM reports regarding missing weapons and restrictions in accessing the weapons storage sites. In this context, we urge all sides to abide by the withdrawal agreement fully and without delay. We also reiterate that any delay in the provision or the manipulation of baseline information and any restriction of SMM access undermine the process.

Full and unconditional withdrawal of all heavy weapons without any further delay in accordance with the Package of measures and subject to SMM verification is essential to further consolidate the ceasefire. Swift agreement on concrete, immediate steps to this end within the TCG and its subgroup on security issues is urgently needed. We reiterate our concern about the continued presence of heavy weapons in violation of withdrawal lines, as well as about the concentration of military hardware beyond the respective withdrawal lines, particularly in separatist-controlled areas, as reported by the SMM.

We deeply regret to learn from the SMM reports that despite some progress the SMM continues to face significant restrictions in its monitoring activities, particularly in separatist-controlled areas close to the border with the Russian Federation. This is unacceptable. The SMM must be granted free and unhindered access to all areas and weapons storage sites.

We again underline the urgent need to step up demining efforts which remain a responsibility of the sides. Presence of land mines and unexploded ordnance, as observed by the SMM, represents a persistent danger for civilians. To this end, we emphasize the urgent need to

reach an agreement on a co-ordinated approach to demining within the security working group of the TCG.

We remain firm in our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and to honour their commitments in full. The ceasefire must be respected in full, all heavy weapons withdrawn from the security zone and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We recall our concern about the reports regarding continued presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in separatist-controlled areas, including the heavy multiple launch rocket system TOS-1 Buratino and a Zhitel jamming communication station. Full clarification regarding the presence of these weapon systems on the Ukrainian territory controlled by separatists has not been provided yet by the Russian Federation.

We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

Mr Chairman, 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*, 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.