

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1050
Vienna, 7 May 2015**

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

The European Union welcomes yesterday's first meeting of the working groups under the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE-chairmanship in Minsk. The launch of these working groups offers a chance for a political process towards the full implementation of the Minsk agreements based on respect for OSCE principles and commitments. We encourage the parties to continue their work without delay and to demonstrate the political will to make the working groups effective. We reiterate our support to the ongoing efforts of the Normandy format in facilitating the implementation of the Minsk agreements. We welcome steps agreed during talks between the heads of state and government of the Normandy format on 30 April, including the launch of working groups, efforts to strengthen the ceasefire and ensure withdrawal of heavy weapons, demilitarisation of Shyrokyne and release of prisoners and detainees and emphasizes the need to implement these fully and immediately by all sides.

Mr Chairman, we once again express our deep concern about the many ceasefire violations along the line of contact, including in recent days around Horlivka, and the fighting that has intensified in and around Shyrokyne and in villages around Donetsk airport, especially Avdiivka. We again call on all parties to halt the fighting and expect Russia to use its considerable influence on the Russia-backed separatists to support the SMM in its endeavours. We are appalled by the many recent security incidents involving SMM monitors. The security of monitors is of paramount importance. The Minsk signatories must ensure safe, full and unhindered access to all parts of the conflict areas, including those controlled by the Russia-backed separatists, also in the border area with Russia.

We remain concerned about the numerous observations by the SMM of heavy weapons missing from established holding areas. We note the assessment by the SMM that planned military parades by Russia-backed separatists may have been used as a pretext to move heavy weapons to the buffer zone. We share the view of the Chief of the SMM that these actions constitute a clear violation of the Minsk agreements. We once again call on the Minsk signatories to provide SMM with the full baseline information that would allow for credible verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

The build-up of Russian troops next to the Ukrainian border and information about continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation further add to our concern. We reiterate that re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its border remains essential. Once again we underline that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution of the conflict based on full respect for OSCE principles and commitments, and full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

Mr Chairman, we reiterate our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. The ceasefire must be respected, heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment as well as mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. We recall the European Council Conclusions of 19-20 March in all their elements, in particular those linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. We expect Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full.

The EU 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 and to contribute to stabilise the situation and 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.