



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°862 Vienna, 20 September 2017**

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#### **EU Statement on the Security situation in and around Ukraine**

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1. The European Union and its Member States express once more their deep concern regarding the volatile security situation in eastern Ukraine. While welcoming the general decrease in ceasefire violations, we note that levels of violence continue to fluctuate and that more needs to be done to eliminate violations entirely, including the prevalent use of Minsk-proscribed weapons. We urge all sides to take immediate steps to ensure full respect for the ceasefire, the withdrawal of all Minsk-proscribed weapons and continuation of the disengagement process.
2. We condemn the continued interference with SMM patrols, a recent example of which occurred in Svitle, where armed men denied access to the SMM despite their orders to the contrary. Access was also denied to two weapons storage sites in non-government controlled areas of Donetsk. SMM freedom of movement is critical to the execution of its mandate and we call upon all sides to assure it; the issuing of orders is not enough and more is required to ensure that agreements and commitments become a reality on the ground. Without proper and unrestricted monitoring by the SMM, there cannot be a verified improvement of the security situation.
3. We repeat our condemnation of the continuing intimidation and threats faced by the SMM monitors, nearly all of which occur in non-government controlled areas. Such actions show a blatant disregard for the safety of SMM personnel and their ability to fulfil their mandate. The continued inadequate response to such incidents creates an environment of impunity that only encourages further threats and intimidation of SMM monitors. It is high time that those responsible are held

accountable and brought to justice.

4. We note that the SMM has observed a small amount of de-mining activity in Stanytsia Luhanska by the Ukrainian Armed Forces but, Madame Chairperson, this falls woefully short of what is required and we therefore restate our grave concern over the lack of substantive mine action. Mines and unexploded ordnance are a significant impediment to the monitoring ability of the SMM and continue to pose a grave and indiscriminate threat to civilians. Therefore we expect all sides to implement their commitments to mark, fence and clear areas contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance, and we once again underline the need for the JCCC to fulfil its coordination role as laid out in the TCG decision on mine clearance. We note with disappointment that, when asked on 6 September to provide a joint schedule for coordinated clearance activities from seven key roads, no plan was forthcoming from the JCCC.
5. We expect the JCCC to fulfil all of its tasks and responsibilities, including rapidly and effectively responding when called upon by the SMM to address any impediments faced by the Mission; we reiterate once again that the SMM and its technical equipment must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine. We urge Russia to exercise its influence over the separatists it backs, to ensure the SMM's safe access and to prevent such impediments
6. We call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists 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 separatists. 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.
7. 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\*, and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND 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, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.