



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council Nr 1014 Vienna, 28 August 2014

EU Statement on the Violation of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation and the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union would like to thank the Swiss Chairmanship for convening a special Permanent Council which was necessary to discuss the latest developments with regards to the crisis in and around Ukraine as well as the OSCE's role in pursuing a peaceful solution.

We are increasingly concerned about the continued deterioration of the security situation in parts of eastern Ukraine, and along the Ukrainian-Russian border. We urge Russia not to take further provocative actions, to stop the increased flow of weapons, equipment and militants across the border and to withdraw this support as well as its additional troops from the border area. We are deeply concerned by the recent reports of Russian soldiers and military vehicles on Ukrainian territory; of continuing and intensified cross border shelling; and of violations of Ukrainian airspace by the Russian Federation. All of these run counter to efforts aimed at de-escalating the crisis in and around Ukraine. Any unilateral military actions on the part of the Russian Federation in Ukraine under any pretext, including humanitarian, is considered by the European Union as a blatant violation of international law. In this regard, we deeply regret that a Russian convoy of 227 vehicles entered Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in violation of previous understandings and the involvement of the ICRC. We are very concerned about the announcement by the Russian Federation of its intention to send more convoys of this kind.

The need to find a political, sustainable solution to this crisis has become a matter of urgency. The European Union underlines the importance of the implementation

of President Poroshenko's peace plan and the urgent need to agree on a genuine and sustainable ceasefire by all parties on the basis of the Berlin Declaration of 2 July with the aim of restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity. The European Union welcomes the meeting between President Poroshenko and President Putin in the margins of a meeting between the Presidents of Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Russia, and EU High Representative Ashton, Vice-President Oettinger of the European Commission, and Commissioner De Gucht. We hope that it will result in progress on a set of concrete issues: the release of persons illegally detained by illegal armed groups; consultations of Ukrainian and Russian border guards and military staff to discuss modalities of control of the border; and a roadmap to be elaborated on the basis of President Poroshenko's peace plan, in order to achieve a mutually agreed ceasefire through the Trilateral Contact Group and to be monitored by the OSCE SMM.

The European Union expresses its increasing concern regarding the humanitarian impact of the on-going crisis in parts of eastern Ukraine and especially the civilian casualties. We reiterate that it is the activities of the armed pro-Russian separatists that are the root cause of the serious human suffering experienced by the civilian population in parts of Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts. We call for respect of international humanitarian law and for humanitarian organisations to be supported and facilitated in their present efforts to deliver the assistance to the population in need. Assistance should be delivered through the appropriate channels in agreement with the Ukrainian authorities. The delivery of humanitarian aid can only be carried out with due respect for the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. We appeal to all sides to the crisis to ensure a safe passage for civilians to leave the areas of crisis and appeal to the Russian Federation to use its influence with illegal armed groups to this effect.

We condemn the 'parade' organised by separatists in Donetsk on 24 August, where around 80 detained Ukrainian servicemen were marched through the streets at gunpoint. We denounce this abuse of their human dignity and this

humiliating treatment. Likewise, we condemn shooting with mortars and Grad rockets by pro-Russian separatists at a refugee convoy, on a road east of Luhansk on 18 August.

We are appalled and saddened by the kidnapping and brutal murder of Mykola Zelenec, Lithuania's Honorary Consul, by illegal armed groups in Luhansk. We strongly condemn this appalling crime and convey our sincere condolences to his family and loved ones. Those responsible for this crime must be held accountable and brought to justice.

While acknowledging that the OSCE is not a humanitarian organisation, we believe the SMM could play a facilitating role in a multinational humanitarian effort endorsed by the Government of Ukraine, together with international humanitarian organisations, in particular the ICRC. In this context, we underline the need for all sides to ensure the safety and security of all personnel engaged in delivering humanitarian assistance.

We recall the continued EU support to the OSCE through the Special Monitoring Mission, Border Checkpoint Observation Mission, and the OSCE facilitated Trilateral Contact Group in their efforts at creating conditions for a ceasefire. We also reiterate the importance of effective border control as an essential element in ensuring security and stability, including through OSCE observers and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

We welcome the deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, as a limited first step towards implementation of the 2 July Berlin Declaration. We call for the implementation of all its elements, including access to Ukrainian border guards to participate in monitoring activities at these two checkpoints. We also call for the expansion of this OSCE Observer Mission in order to contribute to an effective, comprehensive and bilateral control of the Russian-Ukrainian border. We call for regular and expeditious exchange of information between the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the OSCE.

We restate our support for the OSCE SMM's work and highly appreciate its efforts in the aftermath of the downing of the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in Donetsk. We reiterate our call for all OSCE monitors to have safe and free access throughout Ukraine to fulfil their mandate.

We express our continuing support for the Representative on Freedom of the Media in expressing concern for the safety of journalists covering the crisis in and around Ukraine. We note her most recent statement on 27 August 2014, condemning several recent attacks on journalists in the Pskov region in Western Russia, while reporting on issues allegedly related to the crisis in eastern Ukraine. We call for these acts to be swiftly and thoroughly investigated and those responsible to be brought to justice.

Mr Chairperson, the EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls 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 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 MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* 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.