

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council No 1114  
Vienna, 4 October 2016**

---

**EU statement in Response to Briefings by the Special Representative in Ukraine of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Ambassador Martin Sajdik and the Chief Monitor of the OSCE SMM, Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan**

---

We warmly welcome Ambassador Apakan and Ambassador Sajdik back to the Permanent Council and thank them for their briefings. We reiterate the important role the SMM and you personally, Ambassador Apakan, are playing. We reaffirm our full support for the SMM's impartial reporting and the monitors deployed in the field, often under difficult circumstances. We also thank you, Ambassador Sajdik, and reiterate our strong support for your tireless efforts in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

Mr Chair, the European Union welcomes the signing of the Framework Agreement on Disengagement of Forces and Hardware by the Trilateral Contact Group on 21 September, as well as the establishment of three areas for disengagement in Zolote, Petrivske and Stanytsia Luhanska. We expect more locations to follow, so that disengagement can be ensured along the entire contact line. We call for swift implementation of the Framework Agreement, leading to a sustained ceasefire, and the withdrawal by both sides of their troops from Zolote is a positive move in this regard. However, we regret that so far, the SMM has been denied access to the disengagement areas by both sides.

We underline the specific role of the JCCC in facilitating and controlling the disengagement process and guaranteeing safe access of SMM monitors to the three zones and urge Russia and Ukraine to comply with its obligations. We call on the sides in the Political Working Group to agree without further delay on the modalities of local elections in certain parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in

accordance with Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. We reiterate our firm position that conditions for ODIHR monitoring, including ensuring security and access, must be met.

We call on the sides in the Economic Working Group to agree on further steps to restore basic infrastructure, and we welcome the agreement entered into on 18 August on water supplies. We call for a swift implementation of the agreed measures. We call on the sides in the Humanitarian and Economic Working Groups to resolve quickly the situation which has resulted in the cutting of the supply of water in both government controlled and non-governmental controlled areas in Luhansk. Finally, we urge the sides in the Humanitarian Working Group to agree on the release and exchange of all remaining prisoners and illegally detained persons and on removing the severe restrictions imposed on the delivery of humanitarian relief to separatist-held areas.

Mr Chair, we deplore that SMM monitors and equipment continue to face severe obstacles, the vast majority of which have occurred in areas held by Russia-backed separatists since the beginning of the year. In the course of this month alone, the SMM has experienced several deplorable incidents, including the intimidation of monitors, close fire, and the setting of fire to an SMM vehicle. Just last week, SMM experienced jamming of two mini-UAVs and heard the sound of shots in the vicinity of another. We reiterate that this must stop and that those responsible for these actions should not be allowed to act with impunity. We call for the swift and full investigation of all incidents. SMM's access to the border not under Ukrainian government's control remains limited and tightly controlled. Full, safe and unhindered access for the SMM throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian State border, is a prerequisite for the SMM to fulfil its mandate and its role as foreseen in the Minsk agreements. We note with regret that, for example, in the period of 19 to 25 September, 18 access restrictions have occurred in the non-government controlled areas and 11 access restrictions in the government-controlled areas. It is also unacceptable that the mission continues to have no access to Crimea.

The security situation remains volatile and the EU is concerned by the continued violence since the sides recommitted to the ceasefire on 1 September. Mutual trust remains low and the situation is fragile. We deplore the use of shelling near

populated areas which the SMM continues to observe, and which often leads to civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure. We urge the sides to ensure full, swift and verifiable disengagement, strictly adhering to the ceasefire and verifiably withdrawing all Minsk-regulated weapons. This is necessary in order to ensure a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments, and based on full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

The EU expresses its continued concern regarding the humanitarian impact of the on-going crisis in parts of eastern Ukraine. We deeply regret that so-called "humanitarian convoys" from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory, the fifty-fourth of its kind passing through on 22 September. This occurs without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed. The Minsk package foresees that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. An agreement on this in the humanitarian working group remains crucial.

We remain firm in our 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 yet again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet those commitments in full. Moreover, we again 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 and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential. We reiterate our deep concern about information on the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in separatist-held areas. The duration of the European Union's economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

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 nor do we recognise the holding of elections to the Russian State Duma in the Crimean peninsula.

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, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 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.