

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°815
Vienna, 13 April 2016**

**EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around
Ukraine**

The European Union and its Member States are deeply concerned by the significant increase of ceasefire violations, further worsening the volatile situation along the line of contact. The high number of incidents involving the use of heavy weapons, larger calibre artillery and mortars is particularly worrying. Close proximity between military formations on both sides further adds to our concerns, as it poses considerable risk of escalation. We call for immediate steps to de-escalate the situation and consolidate the ceasefire. All sides must unconditionally and verifiably withdraw all Minsk-regulated weapons. These are necessary steps in order to move towards a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

We condemn in strongest terms the recent incidents of targeting the SMM monitors. Such actions are unacceptable and must stop immediately. Full implementation of the Minsk agreements requires that the SMM has full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We deplore that considerable restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement continue to occur, SMM patrols are still denied access to certain areas, delayed or provided with only conditional access overwhelmingly in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government. The SMM UAVs continue to be jammed or shot at. This is contrary to the Minsk agreement's spirit and letter. All restrictions must be lifted without further delay.

We regret the limited recent progress in the Trilateral Contact Group and its relevant working groups. We urge the sides in the Security Working Group to agree on concrete measures to de-escalate the situation along the line of contact. Moreover, we urge all sides to adhere to agreements reached in this format to

achieve improvement on the ground. In this context, we deeply regret that the 31 March deadline for implementation of measures outlined in the Decision of the Trilateral Contact Group on Mine Action has passed with little sign of progress. Despite some reported positive steps, mostly in government-controlled areas, the SMM has not recorded any systematic, organised action. We also regret that demining has been completed in only some of the 12 identified priority areas, in particular due to the lack of adherence to agreed local ceasefire arrangements and the dysfunction of the JCCC. We echo the SMM's concerns that breaking of agreed ceasefire arrangements creates mistrust and keeps tensions high with negative repercussions for the civilian population.

We deeply regret that co-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.

We remain firm in our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments, in order to achieve a sustainable political settlement of the conflict, based on full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. 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 their commitments. The ceasefire must be respected, all heavy weapons and those weapons comprised in the Addendum of 29 September 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 concern about information regarding the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia.

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, LIECHTENSTEIN 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 and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.