



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°856 Vienna, 7 June 2017

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#### EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

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The European Union and its Member States remain deeply concerned by the volatile security situation in eastern Ukraine, characterized by ebbs and flows in the number of ceasefire violations recorded by the SMM at the main hotspots and along the contact line. Despite restricted patrolling following the fatal incident of 23 April, the SMM registered in the period of 22-28 May more ceasefire violations and continued use of weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements. This negative trend was again accompanied by lack of progress on disengagement as well as on mine action, which further gives rise to concern. Civilians remain the ultimate victims of the situation on the ground. We deplore shelling from and of residential areas which led in the period of 22-28 May to 9 confirmed casualties, as well as damage to civilian infrastructure. Mines and UXO continue to pose another serious threat to both civilians and the SMM. Since the beginning of this year, the SMM confirmed 50 civilian casualties caused by mines and UXO.

We therefore again urge all sides to take immediate steps to ensure full respect for the ceasefire, the withdrawal of Minsk-proscribed weapons, complete disengagement and comprehensive mine action. We expect all sides to live up to their responsibility 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 deplore the ongoing intimidation of the SMM in separatist-controlled areas. This includes hostile rhetoric of Russia-backed separatists towards the SMM, accusing the Mission of not being present to verify violations, civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure. The separatists at the same time fail to ensure the SMM's access to implement its tasks. Moreover, they restrict the SMM's freedom of

movement: As reported in the SMM 31 May weekly report, apart from areas contaminated with mines and UXO, the SMM's freedom of movement was restricted exclusively in "DPR"-controlled areas on 14 occasions. We repeat that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine and we urge Russia to exercise its influence over the separatists it backs to abide by their commitments regarding the SMM's access and to ensure accountability. We underline the role of JCCC in ensuring rapid response to impediments to SMM monitoring and remain concerned by its inability to implement its tasks to this end.

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.

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 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.