



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Special Permanent Council No 1142  
Vienna, 27 April 2017**

---

**EU statement on the recent security incident affecting a  
patrol of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine**

---

The EU is deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic incident in the vicinity of Pryshyb, in an area held by Russia-backed separatists, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, where one member of the Special Monitoring Mission was killed, most probably by a mine and another two were injured. Our deepest condolences go to the victim's family and friends, and we wish the injured a speedy recovery. We thank Ambassador Apakan for his update to the Permanent Council today. We would like to thank Ambassador Apakan and the SMM leadership for their swift reaction to the incident on Sunday, and for their dedication and care extended to Mission members. We join the Chairperson-in-Office Minister Kurz in calling for a thorough investigation ensuring that those responsible will be held to account. Responsibility for the security and safety of the SMM monitors lies with the parties. Accountability is key, and we urge Russia to exercise its influence over the separatists it backs to provide access to carry out a full, impartial and transparent investigation. We reiterate our full support to the continued work of the SMM, its mandate, which provides for safe and secure access, and especially to its brave and dedicated monitors. We appreciate Ambassador Apakan's visit to Luhansk, and we welcome his announcement that internal security regulations and measures in place will be reviewed and, if necessary, adapted in light of the terrible incident.

Sunday's incident was another devastating demonstration of the increasingly dangerous security environment faced by SMM staff, and the civilian population every day, and underscores the urgent need for progress on a peaceful resolution of the conflict, in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Despite the string of commitments made by both sides, ceasefire violations persist and there is a consistent failure to withdraw heavy weapons and carry out demining. This has a

direct impact on the security situation on the ground, including for our monitors. The SMM has repeatedly warned of these dangers: as recently as last week, the mission reported that not only have the sides failed to remove the mines in the security zones, but they have also placed new ones. It is high time that the sides implement the commitments they have undertaken in the Minsk Agreements and subsequent agreements by the Trilateral Contact Group.

Since 15 January 2015, the SMM has recorded 183 incidents which threatened the security of their staff or their equipment, the majority of which occurred in separatist held areas. The SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian – Russian state border to be able to implement its mandate. Without proper and unimpeded monitoring, there cannot be a credible and verified improvement of the security situation. Moreover, the threat to and intimidation of SMM monitors has been growing in recent months, a deeply worrying development that we have repeatedly condemned. In areas held by Russia-backed separatists, restrictions are imposed in a particularly aggressive manner and the SMM is systematically targeted by a disinformation campaign. These consistent attempts to undermine the SMM, and the impunity with which they are carried out, are unacceptable. It is absolutely imperative that those responsible are held accountable. All parties must support the SMM and its ability to exercise its mandate in full. The safety of monitors is a priority and we urge the parties to do their utmost to ensure a safe environment for the SMM to fulfil its mandate.

We remain firm in our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility and to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full. We again call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the separatists, and we remain deeply concerned 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 within its internationally recognised borders, 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 European Union will remain committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures.

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, GEORGIA, and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.