



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 784 Vienna, 25 March 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States would like to convey our appreciation and gratitude to the Mongolian Chairmanship for the professional and dedicated way in which it has handled the FSC activities during its term. We will elaborate further on the work done during the first trimester on the occasion of the assumption of the FSC Chairmanship by Montenegro in April 2015.

The European Union and its Member States reiterate our strong support to the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk agreements adopted in February 2015. Only the full implementation of the Minsk agreements offers a way forward to a sustainable political solution to the crisis which must be based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

We welcome the general decline in violence, including in the use of heavy weapons, in most locations in Donbas. At the same time, we remain seriously disturbed by SMM reports of continuing intensive fighting in several areas, especially in the vicinity of the village of Shyrokyne and Donetsk airport. We join the CIO and OSCE Chief Monitor's calls on all sides to strictly respect the ceasefire and all provisions of the Minsk Package of Measures as well as to allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid and access of the OSCE monitors to Shyrokyne.

We note also that the SMM continues to observe heavy weapons in both Donetsk and Luhansk regions, including within the security zone. This is unacceptable. We call for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine under monitoring of the OSCE as well as disarmament of all illegal groups. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard.

Any attempts to gain territorial advantages will be a clear breach of the Minsk agreements and seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political solution. We urge the Russian Federation to exert its influence over the separatists to fully implement their commitments.

While noting some progress in facilitating the implementation of the SMM monitoring and verification activities, we remain deeply concerned about none of the signatories of the Minsk Package of Measures having yet provided the SMM with baseline information that would allow for systematic verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

Moreover, SMM continues to experience serious restrictions to its freedom of movement. In this respect, we welcome the information provided by the Ukrainian delegation at last week's FSC meeting that individual cases of restrictions to the SMM freedom of movement are dealt with by the Ukrainian authorities.

We strongly urge all parties, in particular the pro-Russian separatists, to grant SMM safe, unconditional and unfettered access to the areas under their control as well as to provide the SMM with the requested baseline information.

Mr Chairman,

We call for the full implementation of all aspects of the Minsk agreements by all signatories, including substantial and effective OSCE monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We reiterate that re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border with Russia remains of paramount importance.

In this context, we express our deep regret that yet another Russian so called humanitarian convoy entered Ukrainian territory on 19 March in violation of Ukraine's national legislation, recognised international practices, as well as previously agreed modalities with the ICRC. We recall our position that this act constitutes a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We draw attention that the Minsk Package of Measures calls for humanitarian aid to be delivered through an international mechanism.

In addition, we call for respect of international humanitarian law and principles, notably in ensuring safe passage for all those who want to leave the conflict area and for humanitarian workers to deliver aid.

The European Union reiterates its commitment to fully implement its policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. We stand firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and call upon the Russian Federation to do likewise.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA^{*}, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND^{**} and ALBANIA, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member 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.

^{**} Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.