



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chairman, we would like to congratulate Ukraine on the inauguration of President Volodymyr Zelensky and welcome his priority for restoring peace. The EU and its Member States remain deeply concerned about the situation on the ground in the area of the conflict, which is a consequence of acts of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. In the period of 6-12 May the SMM registered a 58 percent increase in ceasefire violations and an almost threefold increase in the number of explosions compared to the previous reporting period. This is extremely worrying. We regret any loss of human life and injuries to civilians and military personnel. Sadly, civilians continue to suffer from the violence which poses a serious threat to their lives, causes damage to their houses and critical infrastructure and leaves large areas along the contact line contaminated with mines and UXO. We reiterate that lasting ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons, disengagement of forces and comprehensive demining are important steps toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Mr. Chairman, the SMM must have safe, secure and unhindered access throughout Ukraine. This includes the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula and the Ukraine-Russia state border to which the SMM is systematically denied access. We deplore any impediments to the SMM's work, including restrictions to its freedom of movement occurring predominantly in areas controlled by Russia-backed armed formations. We are concerned about the outgoing fire, despite security guarantees provided, near the Donetsk Filtration Station reported last week by an SMM patrol. We reiterate our utmost concern over the systematic restrictions to the SMM's

access to areas of southern Donetsk and the uncontrolled state border with Russia by Russia-backed armed formations, which create blind spots for the SMM and prevent us from receiving an accurate picture of the situation on the ground. We condemn the continued targeting and jamming of the SMM's technical assets, including mini and mid-range UAVs. We are concerned about the losses of 3 long-range UAVs since October 2018. We welcome the resumption of long-range UAV flights on 11 May following the latest crash. We are however deeply concerned that the LR UAV flights continue to experience jamming during most of their flight operation as the continuation of electronic interference poses a risk of further LR UAV losses. Mr. Chairman, we repeat that those responsible for any wilful damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs and other assets should be held accountable, both politically and financially.

Our position on the unjustified use of force by Russia near the Kerch Strait on 25 November 2018 and its negative impact in the Black and Azov Seas and Russia's violations of international law is well known. We strongly call on Russia to release the crew members and return their vessels unconditionally and without delay. We expect Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage through the Kerch Strait to and from the Azov Sea, in accordance with international law.

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 to the conflict in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these principles and commitments must be restored. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations 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 armed formations. 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 within its internationally recognised borders, and call 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 stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. We express our deep concern about the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia, which continues to impact negatively the security situation in the Black Sea region and beyond.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.