



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1017 Vienna, 18 September 2014

EU Statement in Response to the Report by the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the Chief Monitor, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, back to the Permanent Council. We have stressed our strong support for the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) on numerous occasions in the past and we continue to lend our continual support. After the Minsk protocol and with a ceasefire now in place, the OSCE and the SMM have an even more vital role to play. And there is an urgent need to act now to ensure that SMM monitoring becomes an effective part of a legitimate, credible and durable ceasefire and border management regime that will contribute to a sustainable political solution, based on respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is what the international community expects.

We are deeply worried about the increasing number of ceasefire violations, and call on all parties to abide by the Minsk protocol. We also call on Russia to withdraw its remaining troops and weapons from Ukrainian soil, and cease its support for the separatists. In this context, we express our deep concern about security incidents involving the SMM, including mortar shells exploding in the immediate vicinity of SMM monitors and SMM vehicles being hit by artillery fragments. We join the Chief Monitor in urging all sides to abide by the ceasefire and allow monitors to carry out their duties and verification of the ceasefire. The safety of SMM security is of paramount importance and the staff must have safe and free access to fulfil their mandate. We encourage the SMM to report regularly on its security provisions.

We welcome the SMM's redeployment of monitors and deployment of first responders to eastern and southern parts of Ukraine shortly after the adoption of

the Minsk protocol and the steps being taken to urgently deploy additional monitors up to the mandated maximum of 500.

We appreciate the efforts made so far to monitor the ceasefire, including the setting up of a clearing house mechanism. We support the ongoing efforts of the Trilateral Contact Group to support implementation of the Minsk protocol and welcome that the SMM is now invited to attend its meetings. We encourage the Chairmanship, the Trilateral Contact Group, the Secretariat, and the SMM to do their utmost to ensure effective coordination and exchange of information.

The EU attaches high priority to border monitoring as an integral part of a sustainable political solution, which fully upholds OSCE principles. We call on the SMM to develop and share their planning on how they can contribute to an effective and comprehensive permanent monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border without delay. We reiterate our call for extension of the OSCE Observer Mission currently covering two Russian checkpoints to other checkpoints along the border with Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts of Ukraine; and for it to have an expanded mandate to permit it to operate outside the territory of the checkpoints in order to contribute to effective and comprehensive border monitoring. We encourage the Chairmanship to develop possible options in this regard.

Mr Chairman, we are well aware that the tasks of monitoring and verification of the ceasefire and border monitoring are extremely demanding. We therefore fully support the urgent expansion of the SMM to the full potential of its mandate. We are also ready to consider further expanding the SMM and its mandate if the monitoring tasks so demand. Rest assured that the EU and its Member States will continue to strongly support the Mission, including by providing qualified staff and appropriate equipment.

We call on the Chairmanship, the Secretariat, the SMM, and the Ukrainian authorities to ensure that UAVs will be in operation in eastern and southern parts of Ukraine without delay.

We commend the SMM for its effort to facilitate access to the MH17 crash site over the past months. We repeat our call for immediate, safe and unrestricted access to the crash site as part of the ceasefire.

We highly appreciate the impartial and valuable SMM reports. Reporting on ceasefire violations is of major importance. With the expansion in the number of monitors and the use of UAVs we expect the reports to become more comprehensive and the SMM to be better able to verify facts.

Mr Chairman, the SMM was launched to contribute to reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability and security and to monitoring and supporting the implementation of all OSCE principles and commitments throughout Ukraine. We trust that the Chief Monitor will continue to do his utmost to fulfil these objectives in the months to come. He and his staff can count on our support to this end.

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 LIECHTENSTEIN, 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 the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.