



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°940 Vienna, 5 February 2020

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chairman, the EU and its Member States remain concerned about the volatile security situation. Almost every day we receive news about further casualties among the civilian population and Ukrainian military personnel, which we deeply regret. In this context, we reiterate the urgency of a full, unlimited and comprehensive ceasefire which should have been in place by the end of last year in accordance with a clear commitment of the leaders of the Normandy Format. The incident reported by the SMM on 30 January of a man injured by an explosive device in Marinka in Donetsk region confirms that a lot of work remains to be done in the de-mining process to the benefit of the population. In this context, we recall the announcement at the Normandy Summit in December on the development and implementation of an updated de-mining plan, in particular the mine action measures. We also look forward to the designation of the three new disengagement areas and commend the SMM for its role and professionalism in monitoring the disengagement process.

The European Union fully supports the continued international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group with the view of helping to end the conflict which to date has cost more than 13.000 lives. We urge all sides to implement the commitments of the Minsk Agreements, including those undertaken by them at the Normandy Summit on 9 December, in good faith. In this context, we commend the Ukrainian leadership for their constructive approach and the political will to negotiate an end to the conflict and call on Russia to act likewise.

We are concerned about the reported ceasefire violations inside the disengagement areas. We urge Russia to ensure full respect for the disengagement agreements by the armed formations, in particular inside the Petrivske area, but also recently in the other disengagement areas where armed formations are still present. Fortification works are ongoing and the SMM's access is repeatedly restricted. All of these actions violate the TCG framework decision on disengagement of September 2016. The SMM's access to non-government controlled areas and its assets continues to be denied or hindered and the SMM UAVs targeted, on an almost daily basis, by means of signal interference and small arms fire.

The safety and security of the SMM is of primary importance to us. We welcome the support of the Normandy Four for safe and secure access of the SMM throughout Ukraine, with a view to the implementation of its mandate to its full extent. We recall our position that any impediments to the SMM's work, including attempts to destroy the SMM's assets, are unacceptable. Those responsible for any wilful damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs and other assets should be held accountable, both politically and financially.

We are very concerned about the humanitarian situation in the non-government controlled areas. The International Committee of the Red Cross is still being denied full and unconditional access to the detainees. The mutual release of detainees that took place on 29 December 2019 was a welcome step in the right direction. We call for the ICRC to receive full, safe and unimpeded access to detainees throughout Ukraine.

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 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 continue to call on Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov in accordance with international law. We express our deep concern about the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia, which continues to impact the security situation in the Black Sea region and beyond.

Thank you.

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

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