



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 794 Vienna, 22 July 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States would like to convey our gratitude to the Montenegrin FSC Chairmanship for the excellent work accomplished during the current trimester. We will elaborate further on the FSC activities under Montenegro's able and dedicated leadership on the occasion of the assumption of the Chairmanship by Norway.

Returning to the security situation in and around Ukraine, we reiterate our consistent position that the full implementation of the Minsk agreements by all parties, based on the OSCE's principles and commitments and the full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, is key to a sustainable political solution to the crisis. We continue to lend our support to all diplomatic efforts, including within the Trilateral Contact Group, the Normandy format, and the SMM, aimed at achieving such a solution.

We note with deep concern recurrent violations of the ceasefire as well as presence, movement and use of heavy weapons in violation of the Minsk agreements. Particularly worrying are the SMM reports about shelling of residential areas resulting in further civilian deaths. We express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and reiterate our strong condemnation of the shelling of residential areas and their use as firing positions in breach of international law.

Concentrations of military hardware within the exclusion zone, especially in and around the separatist-controlled railway-hub Komsomolske, add further to our concerns. Such negative patterns are coupled with systematic jamming of SMM UAVs while overflying the separatist-held area north-east of Mariupol.

Furthermore, the SMM remains unable to fully fulfil its mandate and tasks under the Minsk agreements due to security considerations and restrictions of its freedom of movement, especially in separatist-controlled areas. The SMM remains prevented from monitoring the significant portion of the border not under the control of the Ukrainian authorities which is one of its main activities under the Minsk agreements.

We therefore urge all parties to ensure safe, full and unhindered access for the SMM and to provide it with the full baseline information that would allow for effective verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

We once again call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements, the ceasefire must be respected, heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations,

military equipment as well as mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We also call on the Russian Federation to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full. We also reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will be a gross violation of the Minsk agreements and seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political solution.

We repeat that effective and comprehensive monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian state border should be an integral part of a sustainable political solution which fully upholds OSCE principles, and re-establishes Ukrainian control over its sovereign territory, including the border.

In this context, we deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

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.