



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°833 Vienna, 2 November 2016

EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States are concerned by the spike in violence in eastern Ukraine. We deeply regret that despite the recommitment to cease fire in September, in the Donetsk region, fighting has returned to levels last seen in August. We underline once again the importance of disengagement, implemented in good faith, as a significant step towards a full and sustainable ceasefire. We welcome in this context the headway achieved at the summit meeting in the Normandy Format on 19 October, including the reaffirmation of the importance of the ceasefire, the need to disengage and to ensure full, safe and unhindered access for the SMM. We urge the sides to build on this in order to achieve concrete progress on the ground.

We are concerned by the reports of the SMM that weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements, including mortars, artillery and multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), continued to be used in high numbers and that the use of this weaponry significantly increased in some areas. We underline the need to respect the ceasefire and to ensure full, swift and verifiable disengagement, as well as the verifiable withdrawal of all Minsk-regulated weapons. These are necessary steps in order to ensure a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

We are disturbed that the SMM's freedom of movement continues to face significant obstacles, particularly in the disengagement areas due to the failure of the sides to remove or fence off mines and unexploded ordnance in line with the Framework Agreement and due to the failure of the JCCC to coordinate and facilitate this process. We condemn in the strongest terms incidents threatening the SMM monitors. As reported by the SMM, on 27 October an SMM vehicle was struck by a bullet near the contact line before entering separatist-controlled area. This is

unacceptable. Such incidents must stop immediately and those responsible held accountable. We deplore any attempts to diminish effective monitoring and verification by the SMM, including the suggestions of the Russian Federation Armed Forces Major General at the JCCC that the Mission coordinates its patrols with the separatists. The SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, in particular to the disengagement areas and also along the Ukrainian-Russian State border.

On 27 October the 55th Russian Convoy entered Ukrainian territory at the Donetsk border crossing point, as reported by the OSCE Observer Mission. We deeply regret that, once again, this happened without a full inspection by the Ukrainian border guards and in violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. This does little to allay concerns about the possibly military nature of the transported cargo.

We call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists 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 separatists. 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, and call upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to strictly observe these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members 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.