

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°825  
Vienna, 13 July 2016**

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**EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around  
Ukraine**

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The European Union and its Member States remain deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in eastern Ukraine. Last week, the SMM witnessed heightened tensions and a sharp increase in ceasefire violations including the use of mortars, artillery and MLRS. The SMM recorded last week the highest number of artillery explosions in a single week since the beginning of this year, which gives further rise to concerns. Regrettably, this extremely worrying trend was accompanied by more civilian casualties and damage. We strongly condemn the use of weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements in the security zone and urge all sides to strictly adhere to the ceasefire, immediately disengage, and unconditionally and verifiably withdraw all Minsk-regulated weapons.

We deplore continuing restrictions to the SMM's work and access, which continue to occur mostly in areas not under the control of the Ukrainian government, where about 70% of the restrictions imposed on the SMM persist. We condemn in particular the systematic nature of such impediments by separatists as in case of repeated access denial to the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, or obstructions to the SMM's monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. Even when the SMM is afforded access to the border the visits are highly controlled. All incidents must be investigated and those responsible must be held accountable. Effective control and coordination must be ensured to safeguard the security of the SMM. The SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, in particular regarding priority areas for disengagement and including along the Ukrainian-Russian State border.

We call on all sides in the Trilateral Contact Group and its working groups to agree on steps toward the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. This includes

further measures to enhance the security situation, notably agreeing to a complete disengagement plan, on steps to improve the effectiveness of the JCCC and on modalities of holding the local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. We recall our firm position that established conditions for ODIHR monitoring, including ensuring security and access, must be met.

We remain firm in calling 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 NORWAY, 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.