



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No 1056 Vienna, 4 June 2015

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#### **EU Statement on Russia's Aggression against Ukraine and Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments**

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The European Union is extremely concerned about reports that Russia-backed separatists have conducted a major attack on the town of Maryinka near Donetsk city. We strongly condemn this blatant violation of the ceasefire and of the obligation to withdraw heavy weapons. We note that the SMM observed the movement of a large amount of heavy weapons in separatist controlled areas in a westerly direction close to Maryinka preceding and during the fighting. We 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 resolution. We remain deeply concerned also by the continuing fighting in other parts of eastern Ukraine, in particular in and around Donetsk airport and Shyrokyne. A number of recent SMM observations are of particular concern to us: The growing presence of heavy weapons in locations not consistent with the Minsk agreements; and an unknown armed group in "DPR"-controlled Petrivske with Russian armed forces insignia.

The impact of the conflict on the human rights situation remains a serious concern to us. In its tenth report the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine in particular highlights allegations of grave human rights abuses, intimidation and harassment of the local population perpetrated by Russia-backed separatists, including killings, torture and ill-treatment as well as illegal deprivation of liberty, forced labour, looting, ransom demands and extortion of money. In Crimea arrests, ill-treatment, torture and intimidation continue to be perpetrated against political opponents, primarily in the Crimean Tatar community. Therefore, we urge the Russian Federation, as occupying force, to put an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions of political opponents in Crimea and investigate all claims of human rights violations. At the same time, the report contains alarming allegations of ill-treatment

and torture by the Ukrainian military and law enforcement personnel. We note the statement of the Ukrainian delegation in last week's Permanent Council that these allegations will be fully investigated. We reiterate that all allegations should be investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

Mr Chairman, we reiterate our strong support to the work of Special Representative Tagliavini within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and the OSCE. We continue to believe that the working groups through their contributions in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group should facilitate a political process towards the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, based on OSCE's principles and commitments and full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. We welcome the meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group and its working groups last Tuesday. We nevertheless deeply regret reports about the Russian representative's walk out from the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group. We call on all participants to be committed to this process and engage constructively in its work. We also once again express our support to the efforts of the Normandy format in facilitating a full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

In line with 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 Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We also expect Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full.

We remain concerned about the build-up of Russian troops next to the Ukrainian border, and information about continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation. We are concerned by reported Russian violations of Ukrainian airspace, including by Russian military UAVs to which the Ukrainian delegation drew attention last week. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its border remains essential. We also note statements by a member of the Presidential Human Rights Council of Russia that the recent expansion of the list of state secrets to include military losses in peacetime raises questions and could serve

to intimidate activists and journalists reporting on the losses of Russian soldiers in Ukraine.

We recall that all hostages and illegally detained persons related to the conflict in and around Ukraine should be released as stipulated in the Minsk package. This includes Nadiya Savchenko and Oleh Sentsov and all other Ukrainian citizens illegally detained in Russia and the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We also reiterate the importance we attach to the provisions of the Minsk agreements concerning the political process. This includes the holding of local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and relevant OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR.

We note with deep concern from the SMM's reports that the mission continues to experience serious security incidents and face restrictions in its monitoring activities. We note in particular that access remains fully or partly restricted in large swaths of separatist-controlled territory, including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We regret that the SMM has been forced to suspend monitoring in key areas, including in Shyrokyne and Avdiivka, due to the security situation. We once again urge all parties to ensure safe, full and unhindered access for the SMM and to provide the SMM with the full baseline information that would allow for credible verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

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, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

Mr Chairman, the EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We once again urge Russia to recognise by acts these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

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 the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.