



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°811 Vienna, 10 February 2016

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

Ceasefire violations remain a deeply regretful part of the daily life in eastern Ukraine, resulting in further casualties and continued humanitarian strife. The European Union and its Member States remain deeply concerned by the worrying increase of ceasefire violations in various places in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as reported by the SMM. We call on all sides to adhere to the Minsk Agreements and to take immediate action to consolidate the ceasefire and move towards a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE commitments and principles.

We remain deeply concerned about the continued presence and use of proscribed weapons of all calibres in the security zone. We are also disturbed by their concentration beyond the withdrawal lines but outside storage sites as observed by the SMM, in particular in areas not under control of the Ukrainian government. We repeat our concern that such large concentration of hardware, particularly noticeable in training areas, further undermines trust and confidence.

We deplore restrictions to freedom of movement of the SMM monitors, vast majority of which occurs in areas not under control of the Ukrainian government, including alongside the Russian-Ukrainian state border, as reported by the SMM. This is particularly worrisome as, according to SMM reports, the number and intensity of ceasefire violations continued to correlate with the presence of proscribed weapons, and freedom of movement restrictions imposed on the SMM. All deliberate impediments to the work of the SMM are unacceptable and must stop immediately and we call on all sides to acknowledge and respect the impartiality of the Mission as it goes about its difficult tasks. Full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine is crucial for the SMM to fulfil its mandate, including the Crimean peninsula and along

the border with Russia. This can be ensured only with a full engagement of all actors on the ground, including the JCCC.

We once again underline the need to consolidate the ceasefire and to fully implement the Minsk Agreements, in order to achieve a sustainable political settlement of the crisis, based on full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and also once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet their commitments. Foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries must be removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential. We remain concerned about information regarding the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia.

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, LIECHTENSTEIN 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.