



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1121 Vienna, 1 December 2016

EU statement in Response to Briefings by the Special Representative in Ukraine of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Ambassador Martin Sajdik and the Chief Monitor of the OSCE SMM, Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan

As always, the European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Sajdik and Ambassador Apakan back to the Permanent Council, thank them for their briefings and for their dedicated and important work. We also appreciate the Chief Monitor's report on the work of the SMM and take this opportunity to reaffirm our strong support to the Mission. On 25 November, as a testament to this support, the European Commission announced an additional €5 million in extra-budgetary support to the SMM, on top of the €25 million already provided and the contributions by the Member States.

This comes at a time when the work of the SMM is as important as ever. As the Chief Monitor made clear, the security situation along the line of contact remains highly volatile, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis at the onset of winter. According to UNOCHA, some 3.1 million people are already in need of humanitarian assistance. Many of them, especially the approximately 600,000 people living in areas held by Russia-backed separatists near the contact line, are likely to face winter without proper heating or access to health services.

We again urge the sides to respect the ceasefire, fully and verifiably withdraw all Minsk-proscribed weapons, disengage, remove obstacles to humanitarian organisations and ensure full, safe and unhindered SMM access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian State border. These are important steps toward a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. To this end, we regret substantial progress was not possible at the Foreign Minister's meeting in the Normandy Format on 29 November, but we

encourage all sides to build on the achieved headway without further delay. The status quo in eastern Ukraine is unacceptable.

We join the Chief Monitor in condemning the significant obstacles and regular intimidation which continue to hamper the SMM. We regret that the SMM lost contact with another mini-UAV on 27 November and reiterate our call on the JCCC to take effective action to prevent cases of intimidation and obstruction from occurring. We also note with concern the recent sighting by the SMM of a vehicle, apparently driven by UAF soldiers, with a logo and wording on its front doors suggesting an SMM vehicle and urge the Ukrainian authorities to carry out a full investigation. The SMM must be allowed to set up planned Forward Patrol Bases in i. a. Amvrosivka and Antratsit, as a necessary step towards giving the SMM better conditions for monitoring along the Ukrainian-Russian State border, allowing the SMM to fulfil its role as foreseen in the Minsk agreements.

We again call on the sides in the Trilateral Contact Group and its working groups to agree on steps toward the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. This includes the modalities of holding local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. We reiterate our firm position that established conditions for ODIHR monitoring, including ensuring security and access, must be met. We call on the sides to fully withdraw from the previously agreed disengagement areas and to agree on additional disengagement areas opening of crossing points over the line of contact, and to complete the release of all hostages and illegally detained persons. We also urge the humanitarian working group to quickly find a sustainable solution to ensure the uninterrupted supply of water to Luhansk region.

We remain firm in our 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 yet again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists it backs to meet those commitments in full. Moreover, we again 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 and foreign armed formations, military

equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential in order to achieve a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. We reiterate our deep concern about information on the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in separatist-held areas. The duration of the European Union's economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to recognise 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 to 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 the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 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.