



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°959
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EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

Madame Chair, the European Union and its Member States are deeply concerned about the disruptions of the ceasefire in place since 27 July. We strongly condemn the incidents last week, which resulted in fatalities and casualties among Ukrainian military personnel. We commend Ukraine for its restrained approach and the decision to seek to defuse tensions via the TCG. We call on the sides to stick to their commitments and underline in this context the need to ensure a proper coordination mechanism to respond to ceasefire violations and similar escalations in the future. We reiterate our call on Russia to return to the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination.

We deeply regret the first child fatality this year, a 15-year old boy victim of an explosive device detonated in his family's apartment in non-government-controlled Makiivka. The fact that the civilian population cannot feel safe even in their own homes underlines the scale of the threat posed by mines and unexploded objects and the urgency of mine action.

Regrettably, an updated demining plan agreed by the sides as well as decisions on new disengagement areas and exchange of detainees, have yet to be finalised. We expect Russia to stop raising objections of procedural nature and thereby obstructing progress on the different tracks within the Trilateral Contact Group. We appreciate Ukraine's constructive approach and political will to reach a sustainable settlement of this conflict and call on Russia to reciprocate.

The SMM must be granted, in accordance with its mandate, unhindered access to the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea. We remain concerned by the continuing restrictions on its freedom of movement, which occur predominantly in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations. On 29 October, at a checkpoint near non-government controlled Olenivka, Russia-backed armed formations allowed the SMM passage towards government-controlled areas only after a two hour delay. All impediments to the SMM's work, including attempts to destroy SMM's assets, are unacceptable. Those responsible for any wilful damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs and other assets should be held accountable, both politically and financially. We urge Russia to use its considerable and undeniable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to remove all restrictions on the SMM.

Madame Chair, on 29 October the OSCE Border Observer Mission recorded another so-called "humanitarian" Russian convoy entering Ukrainian territory via the Donetsk Border Crossing Point. We regret that, again, this occurred 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 possible military nature of the transported cargo. We recall the FSC decision No 3/12 and the OSCE commitment by all pS to ensure strict controls on the export of weapons manufactured or designed for military use. In this context, we call on Russia to comply with this commitment, in particular at its border with Ukraine.

In conclusion, we remain firm in our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution to the conflict in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these principles and commitments must be restored. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs to meet these commitments in full. We reiterate our deep concern 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 armed formations. 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 within its internationally recognised borders and call 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 stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. We continue to call on Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov in accordance with international law. We express our deep concern about the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia, which continues to impact the security situation in the Black Sea region and beyond.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.