



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1000 Vienna, 15 May 2014

EU Statement in Response to the Report by the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, H.E. Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the Chief Monitor, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, back to the Permanent Council. We appreciate his comprehensive presentation on the activities of the Special Monitoring Mission and the challenges it is facing. We believe that this Mission is of major importance to Ukraine and it demonstrates the valuable role the OSCE can play in a crisis situation that threatens security and stability in Europe. We express our strong support for the Mission and its dedicated staff and commend Ambassador Apakan for his excellent leadership.

The Mission is operating under very difficult conditions, especially in the Eastern and Southern parts of Ukraine. The dire and volatile situation in these areas is confirmed by the Mission's highly valued reports that are of utmost importance in monitoring developments on the ground. We are alarmed by the continued efforts of pro-Russian separatists to destabilise the situation and the continued seizure of public buildings, kidnappings, killings and violations of media freedom by illegal armed groups.

Mr Chairman, the EU Foreign Affairs Council had a fruitful meeting with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Didier Burkhalter, on May 12. The Council welcomed the presentation of the proposals by the OSCE Chairmanship. It also commended the work undertaken by the Mission, including assistance in the implementation of the Geneva Joint Statement. The Council took note of the Road Map and expressed its full support to the efforts undertaken by the OSCE

and its Chairmanship to contribute to de-escalating and stabilising the situation through concrete steps, including the establishment of round tables while ensuring Ukrainian ownership. We welcome the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's appointment of Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger as the co-moderator for these round tables, which should be inclusive and reach out to all regions of Ukraine.

The Council encouraged the OSCE to continue its support for the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities to develop a national dialogue. It also encouraged Ukraine to immediately develop a national disarmament programme together with OSCE specialists targeting all illegally armed groups throughout the country and to end all illegal occupation of public buildings and squares. We welcome the offer of Germany and Switzerland to send disarmament experts to Kyiv.

We note that the Mission has already begun implementing the Road Map and we welcome the strengthening of the Mission's capacities for facilitation, mediation and disarmament support, the setting up of Rapid Response Teams and the installation of a hotline. We underline the need for Ukrainian ownership in the implementation of the Road Map.

Mr Chairman, the EU and its Member States continue to support a rapid expansion of the Mission to draw on its full potential with the maximum number of monitors. Indeed, many EU Member States have already made contributions to the Special Monitoring Mission to help this happen. We have listened carefully to the requests by Ambassador Apakan and we recognize the need to provide monitors with the necessary qualifications and extra budgetary support. Brussels is taking the necessary steps to ensure that a decision on allocating 5 million euros to the Special Monitoring Mission will be taken by the end of this week. We will continue to provide support to the mission and call on all other OSCE participating States to do the same.

We note with increasing concern the incidents that have occurred regarding security and access for the Mission's staff as also mentioned by Ambassador Apakan. Incidents such as the one on May 10 and May 13 when monitors were detained for three hours at illegal checkpoints in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions are unacceptable. We believe that continuing attention should be given to the safety and security of staff serving in the Special Monitoring Mission. The issuance of appropriate identity documents to the OSCE monitors is an important practical issue to be solved as soon as possible. We reiterate our call for all OSCE staff to have safe and free access throughout Ukraine in order to fulfil their mandate. Furthermore, we express our concerns about restrictions on the ability to observe the human rights situation, including of persons belonging to national minorities, in Crimea.

We underline the importance of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will provide the Mission and its staff with the necessary privileges and immunities. We look forward to the MoU rapidly coming into force.

We encourage the Mission to continue reporting to the participating States in a timely, explicit and transparent manner, drawing in full on the valuable experience of monitors, and to continue its extensive public reporting. In this context, we underline the importance of an early circulation of the daily reports to participating States.

We note the comments made by Ambassador Apakan on the Mission's coordination with and support to the work of the OSCE Executive Structures as well as its cooperation with other relevant international organisations. We underline the importance we attach to such co-operation and support.

We also welcome the inclusion of a gender perspective throughout the work of the mission.

Finally, Mr Chairman, we would like to use this occasion and the presence of Ambassador Apakan to reiterate how grateful we are to the Mission, not least to the deputy of the Mission Mark Etherington and his team, for its contribution to the release of the OSCE Vienna Document inspectors and their Ukrainian escort.

In conclusion, we wish Ambassador Apakan and his staff success in their endeavours to contribute to de-escalating and stabilising the situation in Ukraine. The international community relies on your efforts to assist the Ukrainian government in overcoming the current crisis.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidates ALBANIA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and MONACO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro 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.