



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council Nr 1036 Vienna, 26 January 2015

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

The European Union is deeply alarmed by recent developments in parts of eastern Ukraine. We strongly condemn the attacks using Grad and Uragan rockets on residential areas in the city of Mariupol on 24 January from separatist held territory as reported by the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM). 30 civilians were killed, many more were wounded and the population of Mariupol was terrorised. We express our deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and wish a swift recovery to those injured. We agree with Ambassador Apakan that this was indeed a reckless, indiscriminate and disgraceful attack aimed at a heavily-populated residential area whose victims included women, children and the elderly. We commend the UN Secretary General's condemnation of the attack, commenting that rockets appear to have been launched indiscriminately into civilian areas, which would constitute a violation of international humanitarian law.

The attack in Mariupol follows a series of indiscriminate attacks, accompanied by the announcements of further offensives by Russia-backed separatists. Recent SMM observations confirm the presence of a substantial amount of heavy military equipment in separatist controlled areas, including advanced multiple rocket launcher systems, surface-to-air missiles, tanks and artillery.

The EU calls on Russia to meet its responsibilities under the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum, both directly and through its influence over separatist leaders, and to stop any form of military, political or financial support. Public statements distorting the reality on the ground will not lead to the badly needed de-escalation.

We recall the Declaration of the Permanent Council of 20 January this year and the Joint Statement following the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine in Berlin on 21 January. We call in particular for full adherence to the ceasefire, withdrawal of illegal and foreign forces, mercenaries and military equipment deployed from the territory of Russia, as well as for securing the Ukrainian-Russian state border with continuous monitoring by the OSCE. We reiterate the need for full and effective control by Ukraine of its border. We call on Russia to respect this.

This significant escalation of the crisis has tragic consequences for a population greatly suffering already for far too long. We urge all sides to do their utmost to avoid civilian casualties.

As stated by High Representative Mogherini on 24 January, further escalation would inevitably lead to a further grave deterioration of relations between the EU and Russia. The EU's foreign ministers will meet later this week to address the latest situation in Ukraine.

We thank the Chairmanship for convening this Special Permanent Council and Ambassadors Apakan and Tagliavini for their comprehensive and insightful briefings. They are of utmost importance to our discussion today. We reiterate our strong support for the activities of the OSCE in Ukraine. We have noted previous statements by the Chairperson-in-Office and we believe that acts such as those committed in Mariupol on Saturday deserve a very strong condemnation.

The Trilateral Contact Group of Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE chairmanship must continue to play an essential role. All signatories of the Minsk agreements should meet without further delay and make progress in the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The SMM, including through the briefing today, continues to provide an important insight in the attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to further destabilise the situation. We once again call on all parties to ensure free and safe access for OSCE monitors and UAVs, including in all parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk

Oblasts as well as along the Ukrainian-Russian state border.

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.