



**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 799-th FSC Plenary Meeting
(14 October 2015 at 10.00, Hofburg)
(Agenda item 2)**

Mr. Chairman,

The outcomes of the recent Normandy Summit, held in Paris on 2 October 2015, gave an important impetus to implementation of the Minsk agreements. Just as it was the case for many months until now, the progress will depend on Russia's readiness to fulfil the undertaken commitments.

All participants of the Summit agreed that sustainability of the cease-fire is crucial for progress on other aspects of the Minsk agreements. In line with the agreed arrangements, Ukraine has started withdrawal of tanks, artillery below 100 mm calibre and mortars below 120 mm calibre. The OSCE SMM was provided with information on types of weapons to be withdrawn, routes and storage sites. The process started on 3 October in Luhansk oblast with tanks T-64 and T-72, 85 mm artillery and 82 mm mortars being withdrawn. The first stage of withdrawal of tanks in Luhansk oblast has been already completed.

According to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine the Ukrainian military ahead of schedule - on 12 October - also completed the second stage of withdrawal of all artillery below 100 mm calibre in Luhansk oblast. Following this statement the SMM observers can take necessary verification measures according to the baseline information.

It is our firm position that the withdrawal of smaller caliber weapons should be accompanied without delay by the full and unconditional withdrawal of all heavy weapons by all sides, including by Russia and the militants it supports, which will also have to be verified by the SMM. This will contribute to the sustainability of the ceasefire and constitute an important step towards the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Mr. Chairman,

Since our last meeting the de-escalation process in Donbas has further notably consolidated. We consider that the trend observed since the beginning of September allows us to have cautious optimism in relation to bigger picture of the settlement. I underline the word cautious because on 7 October the militants violated the cease-fire by attacking the Ukrainian position near Troitske with anti-tank missiles, leaving four soldiers wounded. The incident was reported to the SMM, which assessed that the missiles had been fired from the east or south-east. The Ukrainian side called for an urgent meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group to prevent any further violations.

It is of our particular concern that at a time when Russia speaks about peace in Ukraine and has agreed to the withdrawal of some categories of weapons from the line of conflict, it continues to provide sophisticated heavy weaponry and ammunition to the militants in the east of Ukraine. The Russian weapons remain present in Donbas, as again witnessed by SMM, when on 26 September the Russian multiple launch thermobaric rocket system TOS-1 "Buratino" of 220 mm calibre and several weeks earlier the mobile jamming station R-330ZH "Zhytel" were registered. And this is not

the first time when our delegation together with many other delegations of the OSCE participating States is raising this issue at the FSC meetings and requesting the delegation of the Russian Federation to explain the presence of this highly sophisticated Russian military equipment in the militant-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine.

At the FSC meeting on 30 September 2015 the delegation of Ukraine provided evidence of the presence of the Russian military personnel and equipment on the occupied territories in Donbas. In particular, we pointed out that there are over 33 thousand mercenaries and about 9 thousand regular Russian troops of the combined Russian-terrorist forces in Donbas.

The combined Russian-terrorist troops in Donbas are divided into two army corps: one in Donetsk and one in Luhansk region, which are under the control of the combined Russian-terrorist forces, and that the Russian generals coordinate actions of these army corps on the ground. The Russian military personnel and hardware remain on the territory of Ukraine and are not being withdrawn to Russia, but just rotated. It is necessary to seek their verifiable withdrawal together with thousands of Russian mercenaries.

Mr. Chairman,

The resumption of efficient control by Ukraine over the Ukrainian-Russian border remains crucial for sustainable de-escalation, as the illegal armed groups continue to receive reinforcements through those sections of the border, which are now out of our control.

It is worth noting that in September-October alone the OSCE Observer Mission to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border observed several hundred persons in military-style dress, crossing the border through Gukovo and Donetsk border check-points. Further estimates can be made taking into account that the border stretch covered by the OSCE observation, constitutes only few hundred meters out of a 409-km section of the Russian border, adjacent to the militant-controlled area of Donbas. We call on Russia to put an end to illegal flows that reinforce the pro-Russian militants in Donbas with weapons and manpower.

The SMM continues to provide reporting that demonstrates the failure of Russia and the militants it backs to comply with the commitments they made in Minsk:

- on 6 October the SMM UAV spotted three MBTs and one self-propelled howitzer in the area of "DPR"-controlled Bezimenne (30km east of Mariupol). The SMM UAV also observed beyond the respective withdrawal lines 59 main battle tanks, 5 self-propelled howitzers, and other military equipment in the area of "DPR"-controlled Torez (60km east of Donetsk);

- on 7 October in Myrne ("LPR"-controlled, 28km south-west of Luhansk) and Uspenka ("LPR"-controlled, 23km south-west of Luhansk) the SMM observed what was described as combat training areas. At the first area the SMM noted 23 stationary MBTs (T-64) and at the second - 10 stationary self-propelled howitzers (2S1, 122mm);

- on 8 October the SMM revisited two "DPR" heavy weapons holding areas and noted at the first holding area that six anti-tank guns (100mm MT-12 Rapira) – remained missing since 12 August. At the second holding area, one previously-recorded self-propelled artillery piece (122mm 2S1 Gvozdika) was missing. The SMM was prevented from verifying the serial numbers of the seven weapons remaining: five self-propelled howitzers (122mm 2S1 Gvozdika) and two anti-tank guns (100mm MT-12 Rapira);

- on 9 October the SMM UAVs continued to observe, in violation of respective withdrawal lines, the presence of heavy weapons: in the area of “DPR”-controlled Petrivske (77km north-east of Mariupol) one self-propelled howitzer (122mm 2S1 “Gvozdika), in the area of “DPR”-controlled Komsomolske (74km north-east of Mariupol) seven MBTs and other military equipment, and in the area of “DPR”-controlled Sontseve (60km north-east of Mariupol) twenty three MBTs and other military equipment were observed.

This casts serious doubts on the readiness of the Russian Federation and the illegal armed groups it backs to implement their commitments under the Minsk agreements and to abandon the military options.

Distinguished colleagues,

Freedom of movement and access by the SMM is critical for performance of its monitoring and verification functions. Let me recall in this regard that the SMM weekly report, issued before the summit in Paris, registered that “no freedom-of-movement restrictions or other impediments were imposed in government-controlled areas, but significant obstacles were presented in other areas.”

One of the major outcomes of the Normandy Summit was related to the freedom of movement of the SMM. It was agreed that the OSCE SMM gets full and unfettered access throughout the militant-controlled areas with a special emphasis on the access to the Ukrainian-Russian border. Despite some progress, the SMM monitors and UAVs still face significant restrictions in their monitoring activities, particularly in militant-held areas and especially in the areas close to the border with Russia.

We deem it crucial for the SMM to assign special teams and units to get access to those territories in the militant-controlled areas that have been out of reach for the mission for many months, first and foremost along the border with the Russian Federation, and to report on each and every case where such access would be restricted or denied. We expect Russia to do its utmost to implement promptly this commitment.

Mr. Chairman,

The ceasefire in Donbas over the past month is a good opportunity for progress, but not yet progress itself on resolving the conflict and restoring Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity in the affected areas. For over a year the Russian Federation and its proxies acted contrary to the undertaken commitments. We do hope that the present opportunity for bringing peace to Donbas will be pursued by Russia in good faith.

The interests of peace and security in Europe require that Russia restores its respect for international law and the OSCE principles and commitments. We urge Russia to put an end to its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation and annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which remain an integral part of Ukraine.

I would like to conclude, Mr. Chairman, by informing the Forum about “**White Book-2014: the Armed Forces of Ukraine**”, which can be found at www.mil.gov.ua/content/files/whitebook/WB_2014_eng.pdf. This is the tenth publication of the White Book, which highlights the current state and the main directions for further military development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.