



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Special Permanent Council No 1066 Vienna, 3 September 2015**

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#### **EU Statement on Russia's Ongoing Aggressions against Ukraine and Violations of OSCE principles and Commitments**

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The European Union condemns the violence that followed the vote this week in the Verkhovna Rada on the constitutional amendments related to decentralisation. We offer our condolences to the families of the deceased and our deepest sympathy to those injured in the explosion during the demonstration in front of the Verkhovna Rada.

Mr Chairperson, the constitutional amendments are an important step that paves the way towards devolution of powers from the central level to regions and communities, increasing in parallel the accountability of territorial self-governments to their constituencies. The adoption of these constitutional amendments will also be an important step towards the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. The EU looks forward to adoption of these amendments in final reading later this year, as well as to continued work on the judiciary-related constitutional amendments, taking into account the Venice Commission's recommendations.

Mr Chairman, we welcome the most recent meetings and contacts within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE Chairmanship and its subordinate working groups. We welcome that talks are planned to continue more frequently now, and we hope that they will lead to tangible results soon. A sustainable cease-fire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons, including tanks and artillery under 100 mm, to be verified by SMM, are much needed. We regret that a final agreement on the withdrawal is still outstanding. We reiterate our support for the efforts of the Normandy format in facilitating the full implementation of the Minsk agreements with full respect for OSCE principles and commitments. We also reiterate our strong support to the work of the Trilateral

Contact Group, which must continue to play an essential role in the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We express our deep concern about the volatile and unpredictable situation along the contact line, in particular in and around Donetsk and north-east of Mariupol. Following a worrying rise of incidents and increasing intensity of fighting in recent weeks, we welcome the significant reduction in ceasefire violations reported by the SMM. We join the calls of the Trilateral Contact Group and SMM Chief Monitor Apakan for a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire at the start of the new school year. The continued presence, movement and use of heavy weapons in violation of the Minsk agreements are also of major concern. We note in this context that SMM's UAVs have recently observed large concentrations of military hardware in separatist-controlled territory north-east of Mariupol report. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory would be a gross violation of the Minsk agreements and seriously undermine all efforts to promote a sustainable political resolution.

We repeat our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in good faith and in full respect of Ukraine's territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty. The ceasefire must be respected, heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We also expect Russia to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full.

We once again commend the SMM's impartial and objective reporting. We strongly condemn all restrictions, threats and attacks on the SMM. We are deeply concerned that the mission continues to face restrictions in its monitoring activities, in particular that access remains restricted in large swathes of separatist-controlled territory. The systematic jamming of SMM UAVs, particularly over separatist-controlled areas, is unacceptable and must stop. In that respect we note with concern the loss of a SMM UAV over separatist controlled territory. Those in effective control of the area should immediately assist the SMM in retrieving the UAV. We call on all sides to ensure safe, full and unhindered access for SMM monitors and UAVs to all parts of Ukraine, including to the Crimean peninsula and along the border with Russia.

The European Union expresses its grave concern regarding the humanitarian impact of the conflict. An estimated 5 million people affected by the conflict are in need and approximately 2.5 million people have been displaced. We commend the SMM's engagement with IDPs and look forward to a thematic report on the issue. We deeply regret that so-called "humanitarian convoys" from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed. We reiterate our call for safe and unhindered humanitarian access, in particular to people in need in separatist-controlled areas. The Minsk package foresees that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. An agreement on this in the humanitarian working group is crucial.

Mr Chairman, 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 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 countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members 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.