



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Special Permanent Council No 1069
Vienna, 28 September 2015**

**EU Statement in response to briefing by Special
Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in
Ukraine, Ambassador Martin Sajdik**

The European Union welcomes the timely briefing by Ambassador Sajdik on the crisis in and around Ukraine and the ongoing negotiations in the Trilateral Contact Group and its subordinate working groups. Mr Ambassador, we support your efforts for peace in Ukraine through the restoration of respect for OSCE principles and commitments. We also take this opportunity to once again reiterate our strong support for the work of the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group in their efforts to achieve a sustainable political solution based on OSCE principles and commitments and with full respect for Ukraine's independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We remain encouraged by the continued relative calm along the contact line. Yet we reiterate that the security situation remains fragile and unpredictable. The window of opportunity created by the recent progress on the ground should be seized without further delay, for concrete progress to take place in the Trilateral Contact Group ahead of the upcoming high level meetings.

In this spirit, we urge all parties to comply with the obligation to withdraw heavy weapons. We regret that this key element of the Package of Measures has not been fully implemented so far. It is crucial to sustain a full ceasefire. Similarly, we regret that an agreement on the withdrawal of armoured vehicles and of tanks, smaller artillery systems and mortars, to be verified by the SMM, is still outstanding. Such an agreement must be finalised and implemented without delay.

We also call for an agreement on the holding of local elections in certain parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, relevant

OSCE standards and monitored by ODIHR. The publicly announced plans of separatist leaders to unilaterally conduct so-called local elections on October 18th and November 1st are unacceptable and obstructive. Such so-called elections in separatist-held areas are not in line with the Package of Measures. It is a clear step back which undermines the important work within the Political Working Group, at a time when a constructive approach is particularly needed. We deeply regret that the Russian Federation has not unequivocally distanced itself from such statements but rather voiced public support. We expect the Russian Federation to exert its full influence on the separatists to avoid this scenario and to contribute to a mutually-agreed solution in line with the Package of Measures

We are alarmed by reports that UN agencies and several international humanitarian organisations have been banned from separatist-held parts of Luhansk as of 25 September. We are also appalled that separatist obstruction continues to prevent UN agencies from resuming their activities in separatist-held parts of Donetsk, while so-called humanitarian convoys from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities. The suspension of almost all humanitarian programmes in Luhansk and Donetsk since mid-July is having a serious impact on some 3 million people as winter approaches. We call on the *de facto* authorities to revert this order and abide by principles of international humanitarian law. We urge the Russian Federation to exert influence over the separatists in this regard. We also call on the humanitarian working group to swiftly follow-up on the clear commitment by the Foreign Ministers of the Normandy Format to ensure that humanitarian actors are granted full access to people in the affected areas. We welcome steps taken by the OSCE in providing the State Emergency Service of Ukraine with equipment for humanitarian demining and call for further efforts in relieving the suffering of people affected by mines and other unexploded remnants in Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman, we welcome recent steps taken to accelerate the build-up of the SMM's capacity in light of the recent progress on the ground. But as we have discussed in this Council many times before, the SMM cannot fully perform its vital role unless it is granted free and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including the Crimean peninsula and along the state border with Russia. We welcome some improvement of the mission's access to specific parts of separatist-controlled areas,

but find it unacceptable that the mission continues to face significant restrictions in its monitoring activities in most areas close to the border with the Russian Federation. We are deeply disturbed by the increasing hostilities from the so-called LPR towards the Special Monitoring Mission as recently reported by the mission. We note in particular that on 22 September, SMM observers were threatened at gunpoint by separatists at a checkpoint close to Zaichenko north-east of Mariupol. Separatist members fired into the air as the SMM observers left the checkpoint. Such intimidation is unacceptable and must stop immediately.

We stand firm in our call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full. The ceasefire must be respected in full, all heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. We highlight with concern the large concentration of tanks in separatist-held areas along the contact line as recently reported by the Special Monitoring Mission. We underline the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard. We recall our concern about reports regarding continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation. The duration of the EU economic sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. We also call on the Russian Federation to use its considerable influence over the separatists to meet their Minsk commitments in full.

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 the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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