



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 805 Vienna, 25 November 2015

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States are deeply concerned about the volatile and tense situation in eastern Ukraine with numerous firing incidents, including higher-calibre artillery shelling. We underline the need to consolidate the ceasefire and to implement fully the Minsk agreements, in order to achieve a sustainable settlement of the conflict, based on full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

We welcome progress in implementing the withdrawal of smaller calibre weapons as foreseen by the Addendum and urge all sides, particularly the Russia-backed separatists, to abide by the withdrawal agreement fully and without delay. At the same time heavy weapons withdrawal, accompanied by an efficient verification mechanism, is essential to consolidate the ceasefire and make it sustainable. In this context we call on all sides to provide the SMM with the requested inventory of locations of designated permanent storage sites for these weapons as requested by the SMM on 16 October. We reiterate our concern about the presence and movement of heavy weapons in violation of the withdrawal lines and concentration beyond them, in particular in separatist controlled areas. All heavy weapons must be withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard and call on Russia to use its considerable influence over separatists to meet their commitments.

We stress that the SMM must be granted full, safe and unrestricted access throughout Ukraine. We are concerned about obstructions to SMM's freedom of movement, especially about systematic prevention of SMM's access to the areas along the Ukraine-Russian Federation border.

We remain concerned about risks emanating from land mines and unexploded ordnance causing civilian and military casualties. We reiterate our call on the security working group of the Trilateral Contact Group to agree to a framework on mine action. We appreciate progress made in this regard and the agreement reached on priority areas for demining, including the decision to take immediate action in some of them. We also commend SMM for its facilitating

role within the Trilateral Contact Group as well as on the ground, inter alia to enable infrastructure repairs work. Enhanced coordination of efforts is needed to facilitate further international engagement and support related to mine action and demining in Ukraine. In this context we take note of the thematic meeting on 14 December to inform participating States about current OSCE activities.

We deeply regret that so-called 'humanitarian convoys' from Russia continues to enter Ukrainian territory without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

Mr Chairman, we recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and call upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to strictly observe 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 by 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, and the EFTA countries ICELAND 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.