



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°931 Vienna, 13 November 2019

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson, the European Union and its Member States welcome the positive developments on the three disengagement areas. We are encouraged by the progress achieved in Stanytsia Luhanska, including the well-advanced and ongoing repair works on the bridge, and look forward to their swift conclusion. We also welcome the completed withdrawal of forces and hardware in Zolote and the start of the disengagement process in Petrivske. These steps will considerably help ease the suffering of civilians living close to the contact line who bear the brunt of this conflict.

We hope that these developments will soon pave the way for further discussions in the TCG and Normandy format. In this regard, we commend the Ukrainian leadership for its unwavering commitment to peaceful conflict resolution and call on Russia to act likewise.

On the other hand, despite the July ceasefire recommitment and the progress on the disengagement areas, the security situation in the conflict areas continues to remain volatile. In this context, we regret reports of casualties among Ukrainian servicemen, the civilian population and damages to the civilian infrastructure.

Following the presentation by the Ukrainian delegation, the EU and its Member States deplore the fact that anti-personnel mines continue to be used and that civilians, including children, continue to be injured. We urge those responsible to refrain from the use of such explosive devices.

Mr. Chairperson, any impediments to the SMM's work, including attempts to destroy SMM's assets, which continue mainly in areas controlled by Russia-backed armed

formations, are unacceptable. The SMM must have safe, secure, unconditional and unimpeded access to the entire territory of Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson, last week on 7 November, yet another so-called “humanitarian” Russian Convoy entered Ukrainian territory at the Donetsk Border Crossing Point, as reported by the OSCE Observer Mission. We deeply regret that, once again, this occurred without a full inspection by the Ukrainian border guards and in violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. This does little to allay concerns about the possible military nature of the transported cargo. Our concerns are heightened by the recent significant increase in frequency of the so-called Russian humanitarian convoys.

We reiterate our position on the unjustified use of force by Russia near the Kerch Strait in November 2018, its negative impact in the Black and Azov seas and Russia’s violations of international law. We call on Russia to return to Ukraine’s custody the three vessels seized in the Black Sea in November last year, in accordance with the binding order of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. We further call on Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov, in accordance with international law.

We remain firm in our call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution to the conflict in line with OSCE principles and commitments. Respect for these principles and commitments must be restored. We underline Russia’s responsibility in this regard and once again call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs to meet these commitments in full. We reiterate our deep concern regarding information about the presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the conflict zone. We call on Russia to immediately stop providing financial and military support to the armed formations. The ceasefire must be respected. All Minsk-regulated weapons must be withdrawn. All foreign armed formations, military equipment and

mercenaries must be removed from Ukraine. Re-establishing full Ukrainian control over its state border is essential.

We recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and call 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 stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. We express our deep concern about the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia, which continues to impact the security situation in the Black Sea region and beyond.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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