



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°941 Vienna, 12 February 2020

EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

1. Mr Chairman, the European Union and its Member States regret the fact that, although the number of ceasefire violations in the beginning of January remained slightly below last year's average level, the number of civilian casualties, as well as fatalities of Ukrainian servicemen, has sharply increased since the end of last year. The situation on the ground is therefore far from the full, unlimited and comprehensive ceasefire that was agreed upon at the Normandy Summit on 9 December 2019 and reaffirmed in the Trilateral Contact Group meeting on 18 December 2019.
2. In light of last year's progress in the three disengagement areas, we welcome the focus of the TCG discussions on further possible disengagement areas. This, together with demining activities, is important as it enables safe and secure freedom of movement of the civilian population living near the contact line. We would also like to echo the call for full and unconditional access of the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as other international organisations, to all detained persons, as agreed by the Normandy Four leaders.
3. We are grateful to the SMM for its active involvement in the monitoring and verification of the disengagement process. At the same time, we are concerned about the reported ceasefire violations inside the existing disengagement areas, in particular inside the Petrivske area. We also note with concern that armed formations are still present, including some wearing JCCC armbands in the other disengagement areas, as reported by the SMM. We are also deeply concerned that the Russia-backed formations continue to fortify the outside edges of the disengagement areas, installing heavy weapons, also in vicinity to residential buildings, and laying mines, including antipersonnel mines, as described *inter alia* in the daily SMM report dated 7 February 2020. In this regard, we once again call on Russia to use the considerable influence it has on the armed formations it backs to see the commitments agreed upon in the Normandy Summit fully

respected. We once again urge the sides to adhere to the TCG agreement on disengagement. The TCG framework decision on disengagement of September 2016 must be respected.

4. We support continued diplomatic efforts in working towards a sustainable political solution of the conflict, in full respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine. It is therefore important that the sides take considerable steps to implement the agreed conclusions in good faith. Complying with previous agreements is a prerequisite for building confidence and further progress. In this context, the EU commends the constructive approach displayed by Ukraine and calls on Russia to act likewise.
5. We once again reaffirm our strong support to the SMM and reiterate our commitment to back the Mission in every possible way, including financially and by providing qualified staff and appropriate equipment, allowing it to continue to implement its mandate effectively. The safety and security of the SMM is of primary importance to us. We welcome the support of the Normandy Four for safe and secure access of the SMM throughout Ukraine, with a view to the implementation of its mandate to its full extent. We recall our position that any impediments to the SMM's work, including attempts to destroy the SMM's assets, are unacceptable. Those responsible for any wilful damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs and other assets should be held accountable, both politically and financially.
6. 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 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.

7. 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 continue to call on Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov in accordance with international law. 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 NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA* and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN, ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, SAN MARINO and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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