



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°991 Vienna, 27 October 2021

EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chair, the European Union and its Member States strongly condemn the recent unprecedented attacks against the Special Monitoring Mission in the areas held by Russia-backed armed formations. The severe restrictions placed on the SMM's freedom of movement, including preventing monitors from leaving SMM's premises in the non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk region were completely unacceptable as the safety and security of the SMM monitors are of utmost priority and should not be compromised. We urge Russia to use its considerable and undeniable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to ensure the SMM's freedom of movement. The Mission must have safe and unhindered access throughout the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including the parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions temporarily outside government control, in order to implement its mandate. This is an important provision of both the Minsk agreements and the conclusions of the Normandy Summit in Paris in December 2019 which were both signed by Russia.

We regret that the security situation in the conflict zone continues to remain volatile. In last week's report the SMM informed about an 89 per cent increase of ceasefire violations, and corroborated reports of an additional five civilian casualties. 118 ceasefire violations –around 5% of the total – were attributable to the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons. The situation in the disengagement zones in Zolote and Petrivske is particularly worrying. These areas have again become flash points at the Line of Contact with the SMM noting more kinetic activities, in particular in and around

Petrivske. It is crucial to avoid further escalations. We reiterate that the ceasefire can be preserved if both sides abide by the additional measures agreed in July 2020.

We fully support continued international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group, which are aimed at reaching a political solution to the conflict in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We call on both sides to implement the Minsk agreements in their entirety and underscore Russia's responsibility, as a party to the conflict, in this regard. We recall that the commitments made at the Paris Normandy Summit in December 2019, including new disengagement areas, de-mining zones and new entry-exit checkpoints are still not implemented. Ukraine has demonstrated its willingness to move ahead on these issues. We call on the other side to do likewise.

Mr. Chair, 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.

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

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