



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°992
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EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

The Special Monitoring Mission's weekly report of 2 November informed us about almost 4,000 ceasefire violations between 25 and 31 October, including 759 explosions and 9 ceasefire violations attributable to weapons proscribed under the Minsk agreements. This spike of 162 % on a weekly basis as well as, more generally, the worrying trend in rising ceasefire violations since October last year demonstrates the regrettable deterioration of the security situation in the conflict zone, which is of serious concern to the European Union and its Member States.

We deplore the heavy toll that the conflict is taking on the civilian population. So far in 2021, the SMM has confirmed 81 civilian casualties, including 15 fatalities, victims of shelling, mines and also small-arms fire. In addition, the SMM has confirmed damage to 125 civilian properties and infrastructure sites this year. The reports about increasing numbers of killed and wounded Ukrainian servicemen are also worrying. It is of utmost importance that the sides durably adhere to the ceasefire and agree on an updated demining plan, as decided in the Normandy Summit in Paris. We recall that Ukraine already gave its consent to this plan in September 2020, but that it was not possible to reach a final decision by TCG due to Russia's attempts to politically link this decision to other unrelated issues. We also reiterate our call on Russia to return to the Joint Control and Coordination Commission and engage constructively with Ukraine's military representatives in the JCCC in order to save lives and prevent escalations.

The safety and security of the SMM remains our top priority. We condemn the unprecedented restrictions against the SMM's freedom of movement in the non-

government controlled areas of Ukraine and regret that SMM UAVs continue to experience multiple instances of GPS signal interference. The SMM's spot report on 2 November informed us about the damage to its camera system near government-controlled Hranitne, assessed as recent and caused by probable shelling. We condemn any act which threatens the Mission's members or its equipment. The SMM's impartial, facts-based reporting is a valuable source of reliable information on the situation on the ground. To fulfil its mandate as agreed by all pS, the SMM must have safe and unhindered access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We urge Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to lift the impediments to the SMM's work.

We underline the importance of 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 in this regard. We believe a prolonged stand-still in the TCG is detrimental both to the security and the humanitarian situation in the conflict zone and needs to be avoided. We recall that the Minsk agreements are unambiguous in stating that the TCG consists of representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE, the latter as the mediator. We call on Russia to assume its responsibility, as a party to the conflict, by engaging constructively in the TCG and the Normandy format as well as to implement the Minsk agreements in full. Russia's attempts to advance a distorted narrative on its role in the conflict constitute an obstruction to the negotiations. Mr Chair, there are no doubts about the presence of Russia's military equipment, including the most modern one, in the conflict zone. The SMM has provided irrefutable proof in this regard which was pinpointed by us and other delegations in the past. We once again urge Russia to withdraw its weaponry from Ukraine, thus also contributing to the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In conclusion, 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* and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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