



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°950
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EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine

Mr Chairperson, this year's Annual Security Review Conference, had again a special session dedicated to the situation in the illegally annexed Crimea and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. The European Union and its Members States will continue to be actively engaged in such discussions in different international fora, expressing their principled stance on this blatant violation of international law and fundamental principles of the OSCE. This conflict continues to represent the most serious challenge to European security order.

We wish to recall today what the Chief Monitor Amb. Cevik referred to, at the ASRC last week, as his two main preoccupations. Firstly, the continued restrictions on the Mission's freedom of movement, in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations. The restrictions under the pretext of Covid-19 –in place for the last 100 days - limit the Mission's ability to cross the Line of Contact and to move between non-government controlled Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This constraint on the Mission's operational capabilities risks to divide the Mission into three separate parts, in violation of its mandate to operate as a single, cohesive Mission throughout Ukraine. We reiterate that these restrictions on the SMM are unacceptable and we call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs to ensure that the SMM has full, safe and unhindered access in accordance with their mandate.

Secondly, we share the concerns of Ambassador Cevik regarding the safety and security of the SMM and its assets. Last month saw a number of incidents with gunfire and explosions near SMM patrols, putting the lives and health of the monitors at risk. Again, we witness a worrying trend to deliberately target SMM cameras in order to limit the Mission's monitoring capabilities, in particular in areas with higher military activities. At the last FSC, many delegations, including us, strongly condemned the destruction, by gunfire from a close distance, of a new and expensive camera in non-government-controlled area near Petrivske. Last week, on 22 June, another SMM surveillance camera near Shyrokyne was severely damaged by "a round from an undetermined weapon fired from a north-easterly direction". Moreover, SMM UAVs continued to be jammed and fired at. We call on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to ensure the safety and security of the SMM personnel and its assets. Such acts of endangering SMM observers and destruction of SMM equipment must be thoroughly investigated and investigation results reported to pS. Those responsible for impeding the work of the SMM and for destroying its assets should be held accountable, both politically and financially.

Mr Chairperson, we firmly support the continued international diplomatic efforts in the Normandy process and at the Trilateral Contact Group. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility, to act constructively within the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format and to implement the Minsk agreements in full. We are encouraged by reports of good discussions at the latest meeting of the TCG and hope to see, in a near future, tangible results on all the commitments undertaken at N4 Summit in December, including the urgently needed comprehensive ceasefire.

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, 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.