



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1045 Vienna, 19 March 2015

EU Statement on Russia's Aggression against Ukraine and Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments

The European Union welcomes that the ceasefire continues to be largely respected. However, the situation remains fragile and instances of ceasefire violations still occur, including in and around Donetsk airport and east of Mariupol as reported by the SMM. The ceasefire must be fully observed. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will seriously undermine all efforts promoting political resolution of the conflict. We repeat our call on Russia to use its influence over the separatists to fully implement their commitments.

We are encouraged by the SMM's reports of a general decline in the use of heavy weapons. But we reiterate that for the SMM to verify a withdrawal in line with the Minsk package, the SMM must receive the necessary baseline information. At the same time, we are concerned by the daily reports on restrictions on SMM access and freedom of movement by third parties. We call on all sides to provide the baseline information and to guarantee the security, safety and unconditional access for SMM monitors that would allow the urgently needed verification of withdrawals of heavy weapons foreseen in the Minsk package.

Full respect for the ceasefire regime and a verified withdrawal of heavy weapons are essential steps in the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Full implementation of all aspects of the agreements by all signatories remains the only way forward towards a sustainable political solution. Any solution must be based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We once again call for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine under OSCE monitoring as well as disarmament of all illegal

groups as foreseen in the Minsk documents. We underline Russia's responsibility in this regard. We recall that the Minsk Protocol called for a substantial and effective OSCE monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We reiterate that re-establishing full Ukrainian control over the state border with Russia remains essential.

We recall that in keeping with the commitments of the Minsk package all hostages and detained persons related to the conflict in Ukraine should be released. We note with concern that SMM reports that detainees are being used to recover remains at Donetsk airport and call for these detainees to be released. We once again call on Russia to respect its international commitments and to immediately release Nadiya Savchenko as well as Oleh Sentsov and all other Ukrainian citizens illegally detained in Russia. We will continue to follow these cases very closely. We note with concern that Ms. Savchenko has resumed her hunger strike to protest her illegal detention and underline that Russia bears a responsibility for her very fragile health.

The provisions of the Minsk agreements concerning the political process are also of major importance and require swift and sustained progress. We are studying the two resolutions and amendments to the law on interim self-governance status adopted this week by the Ukrainian Parliament and their impact on the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. All steps in the direction of the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements are to be welcomed. All signatories of the Minsk Agreements share the responsibility to ensure a full and transparent fulfilment of agreed steps.

Mr Chairman, we recall that the Minsk package foresees that humanitarian aid will be delivered through an international mechanism. We deeply regret that so-called humanitarian convoys from Russia continue to enter Ukrainian territory, without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We once again urge Russia to recognise by acts these fundamental principles that it has itself

invoked many times and to contribute to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene these principles. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.