



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on the Security Situation in and around Ukraine

Mr. Chairman, the recent SMM reports do not instil too much optimism. Regrettably, the security situation is again becoming volatile. Almost every day we receive reports about further casualties among the civilian population and Ukrainian military personnel, which we deeply regret. Only last Sunday, two Ukrainian soldiers were killed as a result of shelling and mine explosions. The sharp increase in the number of fatalities among Ukrainian military personnel is mostly due to heavy shelling with the use of weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements. In this context, we reiterate the urgency of a full, unlimited and comprehensive ceasefire which should have been in place by the end of last year in accordance with the clear commitment of the leaders of the Normandy Format.

We urge Russia to ensure the respect for the disengagement agreements by the armed formations, in particular inside the Petrivske area where armed formations are still present, fortification works are ongoing and the SMM's access is repeatedly restricted.

The SMM reports paint a bleak picture of ongoing impediments to the work of the Mission, occurring overwhelmingly in the non-government-controlled areas, including denials of access and attempts to destroy its assets. Such impediments to the SMM's work are unacceptable. The safe and secure access of the SMM throughout Ukraine with a view to the implementation of its mandate to the full extent is vital.

This was also reconfirmed by the recent Normandy Summit. In this context, we recall our position that those responsible for any wilful damage, destruction or loss of SMM UAVs and other assets should be held accountable, both politically and financially. Regrettably, there seems to be a worrying increase in incidents involving the SMM UAVs, in particular through signal interference and small arms fire. We recall that the UAVs are assets, to which we all contribute financially, and which are crucial for effective monitoring, the core task of the Mission, to which we all have subscribed.

Mr. Chairman, the European Union and its Member States reiterate their full support to the continued international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. We urge the sides to implement all the commitments, including those undertaken at the Normandy Summit on 9 December, in good faith. In this context, we commend the Ukrainian leadership for their constructive approach and the political will to negotiate an end to the conflict and look forward to a change of course on the other side. Furthermore, we hope that the TCG meeting today in Minsk will bring much-needed progress in the implementation of the Normandy Summit commitments.

Mr. Chairman, we have been consistent in expressing our deep concern about the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia, which impacts the security situation in the Black Sea region and beyond. In this context, we thank the Ukrainian Delegation for the presentation it delivered at the FSC meeting last week, which illustrated the worrying scale of the problem. The EU recalls the UN General Assembly Resolution 74/17 of December 9, 2019 on the matter and urges Russia to implement it fully and without delay.

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.

The Candidate Countries of 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.

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