



**EUROPEAN UNION**

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**EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine**

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Mr. Chair, the European Union and its Member States regret that the security situation in the conflict zone remains volatile. Last week, the SMM observed a 42 per cent increase in the number of ceasefire violations and explosions along the entire line of contact, including a spike of 1,302 violations and 134 explosions within the periphery of the Zolote disengagement area on the night of 23-24 June as well as a four-fold increase in ceasefire violations within 5km radius of the Donetsk Filtration Station. These upward trends are worrisome and must be reversed. We repeat that the ceasefire can be best preserved if both sides implement their commitments repeatedly made in the TCG and adhere to the additional measures agreed in July 2020. In this context, we deplore any military provocations and commend Ukraine for its restraint.

Our position on the conflict remains clear and coherent. We decisively reject Russian attempts to portray itself as a mediator in an “internal Ukrainian conflict”. The Minsk Protocol is unambiguous in stating that the TCG consists of representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE, the latter being the mediator. Finding a sustainable solution to the conflict requires frank and honest discussion on its nature, as well as political will to implement the respective commitments. We therefore urge Russia, as a party to the conflict, to take responsibility for its actions and to constructively engage in the discussions on the implementation of the Minsk agreements in good faith. The use of threatening rhetoric as we heard last week in this forum is unacceptable.

We reiterate the importance of a faithful implementation of the OSCE principles and commitments concerning military transparency. We call on Russia to engage meaningfully under Chapter III of the Vienna Document and provide necessary transparency on its remaining forces along its border with Ukraine and in the illegally annexed Crimea. We also look forward to a substantial briefing on the upcoming large scale military exercise “Zapad 2021”.

The SMM must have full freedom of movement within the entire territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and along the whole Ukraine-Russia state border. We regret that the Mission has faced restrictions to its freedom of movement on 18 occasions during the previous week, all of which have occurred in non-government-controlled areas. These restrictions violate the Mission’s mandate agreed by all pS. We urge Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to make sure that all restrictions on the SMM’s freedom of movement are removed.

Mr. Chair, we deplore that SMM UAVs have been subjected to GPS signal interference 55 times over the past week, causing planned launches on six occasions to be aborted. We consider unacceptable that on 29 June, an SMM long-range UAV permanently lost spatial control and crashed due to strong dual GPS interference, after attempting to land twice at its base in Stepanivka. Moreover, on 22 June the Mission registered 40 shots of small arms fire assessed as aimed at its UAV, near non-government controlled Kalynove-Borshchuvate, in Luhansk region. We are concerned about this worrying trend of increased GPS interference since March 2021 and about the presence of jamming equipment on both sides of the line of contact. At the same time, the SMM continues to report modern Russian electronic warfare equipment in the conflict zone that has never been in use by Ukrainian armed forces. We have still not heard any credible explanation from our Russian colleagues on how such sophisticated weapons were transported into Ukraine. The OSCE being a platform for dialogue, we urge Russia to respond to this issue raised recently by a number of delegations.

We also deplore the damage caused by gun fire to one of the SMM cameras at the Oktiabr mine in non-government control area in Donetsk region on 28 June. Targeting of SMM

assets must stop. This significantly hinders the Mission's ability to conduct effective monitoring and reporting of the security situation and puts the Mission members and its assets at risk. Those responsible for any willful damage, destruction or loss of SMM assets should be held accountable, both politically and financially.

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 for 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 Russia's actions to block access to parts of the Black Sea, including near illegally-annexed Crimea and the Kerch Strait, and 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.

Mr. Chair, I kindly request that this statement be joined to the Journal of the Day.

The Candidate Countries 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.