



## EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°951  
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### **EU Statement on the security situation in and around Ukraine**

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Mr. Chairperson, the European Union and its Member States remain concerned about the volatile security situation in eastern Ukraine. As underlined in the latest SMM's quarterly report, the number of average ceasefire violations is still high, with spikes of violence continuing to occur, including near populated areas. We deeply regret the high human toll that this conflict is taking, in particular on the civilian population. In the last three months the SMM was able to corroborate 26 civilian casualties including six children. This demonstrates once again the urgent need for a comprehensive ceasefire.

In this context, we welcome the UN Security Council Resolution 2532 (2020) on COVID-19, expressing its support for the Secretary-General Guterres' appeal for a global ceasefire amid the pandemic. The continued engagement of the Security Council will be critical to mitigate the security implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this resolution has now to be implemented and deeds have to follow words, especially in the case of those who adopted this resolution. It is therefore very important that the sides take the necessary steps to implement the common agreed conclusions of the Paris N4 Summit of December in good faith, notably recommitment to a full and comprehensive ceasefire, and bring their discussions on other issues, such as further release of conflict-related detainees, agreement on new disengagement areas and opening of new EECPs, as well as de-mining activities to a positive conclusion.

In this context, the EU commends the constructive approach displayed by Ukraine and calls on Russia to act likewise, including within the TCG.

We are also gravely concerned about the restrictions on the freedom of movement of the Special Monitoring Mission, including those under the pretext of the COVID-19 pandemic. Altogether, in the last quarter the SMM was hindered in its movements 273 times, with 262 cases, i.e. 96% of the total, occurring in the non-government-controlled areas. And on 171 occasions, ca. 63%, the members of the Russian-backed armed formations referred to COVID-19 as a pretext. These repeated restrictions are unacceptable as they run against provisions of the Minsk agreements and significantly affect the Mission's operation posture and ability to fulfil its mandate.

We wish once again to underline the importance of the Mission's technical assets, even more so during the current circumstances, for the SMM's ability to implement its mandate. In addition to the destruction of a new and expensive camera in non-government controlled Petrivske and of another Mission's camera in government-controlled Shyrokyne earlier last month, on 30 June, another two cameras in the Oktiabr mine near non-government controlled Vesele were also damaged with weapons used within the proximity of the camera sites. This pattern of deliberate destruction of SMM assets is utterly worrisome and must stop. We reiterate our view that such incidents must be thoroughly investigated and investigation results reported to pS. We call once again on Russia to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs in order to ensure the safety and security of the SMM and its assets in the whole territory of Ukraine. 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 format and at the Trilateral Contact Group. The Minsk agreements remain the only framework for the peaceful settlement of this conflict that fully respects sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility, to act constructively and to implement these agreements in full. Given the current situation concerning the implementation of the Minsk agreements, the EU took the decision on 29 June to roll-over the economic sanctions targeting specific economic sectors of the Russian Federation for a further six months. The EU also remains committed to its non-recognition policy of the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. In this context, on 18 June we prolonged our restrictive measures related to Russia's illegal annexation for an additional period of one year.

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.