

EU8 stakeout on Ukraine April 25, 2019

I would like to make the following statement today on behalf of the five EU Members of the Security Council (Belgium, France, Germany, Poland and the UK), joined today by Italy and by the Netherlands and Sweden as previous EU Members of the Security Council, to show the continuity of the EU's position on Ukraine.

We as Member States of the European Union fully support the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

The signature by the Russian President of a decree entitling, *inter alia*, people who permanently reside in certain areas of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions to apply for Russian citizenship in a simplified manner undermines Ukraine's sovereignty.

These regions, just like the entire Donbass, are an integral part of Ukrainian territory. Making it easier for the Ukrainian citizens living there to acquire Russian citizenship runs contrary to the aims and spirit of the Minsk agreements.

The timing of such a decision immediately after Ukraine's Presidential election, which demonstrated Ukraine's strong attachment to democracy and the rule of law, shows Russia's intention to further destabilize Ukraine and to exacerbate the conflict.

We expect Russia to refrain from any such actions that jeopardize the implementation of the Minsk Agreements and that impede the full restoration of Ukrainian government control over those areas as prescribed in the agreements. Russia must in particular end its financial and military support to the separatists.

We call on all parties to fully implement their commitments under the Minsk agreements, beginning with a comprehensive, strong and lasting ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weaponry, and to engage constructively in the Normandy format and the Trilateral contact group. We insist that the Security Council must remain seized of the matter, as these violations of international law are a global concern.