

EU8 Statement ahead of the Security Council Briefing on Ukraine

Tuesday, 12 February

I would like to make the following statement today on behalf of the five EU Members of the Security Council (France, Germany, Poland, Belgium and the UK), and Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden, as former EU Members of the Security Council, which demonstrates 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 the internationally recognised borders.

After five years of conflict, the deteriorating security situation in eastern Ukraine has had an increasing impact on the civilian population, in particular the most vulnerable living in the Non-Government Controlled Areas, and along the Line of Contact where people are under continuous threat of shelling. Some 3.5 million people require humanitarian assistance and protection due to widespread mine contamination, escalating psychological trauma and lack of access to basic services. We share a profound concern for their suffering.

In line with our continued concern regarding the degraded humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine, we urge all parties to the conflict to re-establish full access for all international humanitarian organisations to the non-government controlled areas and to allow smooth and speedy delivery of humanitarian assistance in line with humanitarian principles and International Humanitarian Law. We reiterate our support to humanitarian actors in Ukraine and underscore the importance of a focused and highly prioritised strategy such as the *Multi-Year Humanitarian Response Plan for 2019 and 2020*.

We call on Russia to immediately stop fueling the conflict by providing financial and military support to the armed foundations, and we will remain deeply concerned about information on the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in areas currently not under the control of the government of Ukraine. We strongly condemn the continued threats and restrictions to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, which occur predominantly in areas currently not under the control of the government of the Ukraine. The Special Monitoring Mission must have safe, secure, unconditional and unimpeded access throughout Ukraine.

We remain convinced that a peaceful resolution of the conflict is possible and 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. We fully support the efforts within the Normandy format for implementing the Minsk agreement. The OSCE's role in the Trilateral Contact Group and the Special Monitoring Mission are crucial for implementation in that regard.

The conflict has put pressure on the young Ukrainian democracy and its economy. We call on the Ukrainian government to continue its reforms, and we will continue to support it in its efforts bilaterally, through the EU, and in other international institutions.

In line with UN General Assembly resolution no 68/262 (2014) we do not recognise and continue to condemn the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia, which remains a clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity and a direct challenge to international security, with grave implications for the international legal order that protects the unity and sovereignty of all States