

Speech: EU8 Joint Statement on Ukraine

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

We condemn the illegitimate "elections" planned for 11 November in the non-government controlled territories of the so-called "Luhansk People's Republic" and "Donetsk People's Republic". If held, these illegitimate "elections" would contravene commitments made under the Minsk agreements and violate Ukrainian law. Any such illegal elections would be incompatible with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

We call on the international community to stand united in opposing these illegitimate "elections" that can only serve to undermine efforts to achieve peace in the region. We urge the separatists to abandon the plans for "elections" and call on Russia to bring its considerable influence to bear to stop the "elections" from taking place.

We welcome the renewal of the special status law in the Ukrainian Rada. We urge all sides, particularly the Russian-backed separatists, to commit to full implementation of the Minsk Agreements, beginning with a comprehensive ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weaponry. We fully support the efforts within the Normandy format for implementing the Minsk Agreements.

We remain convinced that a peaceful resolution of the conflict is possible. Only progress on the diplomatic front will bring us to a point where legitimate and credible elections can be held in eastern Ukraine in line with the Minsk agreements.

Russia must play its part by ending its financial and military support to the separatists and withdrawing its armed forces and military equipment from Ukrainian territory.

We also express our concern regarding the degraded humanitarian situation in the conflict area, particularly as the winter season approaches. We also urge all parties to the conflict to re-establish full access of 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.