



EUROPEAN UNION
55th Joint Meeting
of the Forum For Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council
Vienna, 17 April 2014

Mr/Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the European Union and its Member States, I would like to welcome the convening by the Swiss and Maltese Chairmanships of this Joint FSC PC meeting at the request of Canada, also on behalf of Estonia. I would also like to thank the OSCE secretariat, the Conference Services and our interpreters for their flexibility and availability.

The current events in and around Ukraine are a matter of deepest concern to all participating States. Russian military activities are a threat to the security of the OSCE area, and a blatant violation of the basic principles on which this security is based. For these reasons, we would like to commend Canada, also on behalf of Estonia, for initiating the procedure of which this meeting is part. We believe the statement by the Russian Federation in reply is inappropriate and is seriously counter to the spirit of the Vienna Document. Characterising the request as being “groundless” and “immoral” is unacceptable.

This meeting has been convened because the Russian Federation, not for the first time, has been unwilling to co-operate within the framework of the procedure launched in accordance with the mechanism provided under Chapter III “Risk Reduction” of the Vienna Document 2011. We recall that Deputy Minister Antonov just recently reconfirmed that the Russian Federation would continue to honour its obligations under the Vienna Document.

We deeply regret that once again the Russian Federation, by being absent from this meeting, expresses its disdain for the letter and the spirit of the confidence and security-building mechanisms that are a fundamental pillar of our common security. This is unfortunately a missed opportunity to engage in a constructive discussion on legitimate security concerns stemming from the Russian military activities in and around

Ukraine and to uphold efforts to de-escalate the situation in the region. It is not for Russia to judge whether our concerns are legitimate or not. We have concerns and it is their responsibility to provide evidence to allay those concerns. Russia's decision not to participate does not contribute to a climate of trust and confidence between participating States.

We repeat our strong call to the Russian Federation to undertake important steps in this direction by hosting voluntary visits and inspections under the relevant provisions of the Vienna Document, exercising strict restraint in carrying out any military activities in the bordering areas with Ukraine and sharing information about any military activities in those areas, even if they do not fall under the provisions of the Vienna Document.

In a situation where one participating State has illegally annexed part of another in breach of international law as well as fundamental OSCE principles and commitments, we remain convinced that the Russian Federation must make full use of all our CSBM and conventional arms control instruments, in both letter and in spirit, and in an open and transparent attitude as is displayed by Ukraine. The best way to reconcile different interpretations on the military situation is transparency and openness: If there is nothing to hide there is nothing to fear.

The last days and hours have once again seen a dramatic increase of tension in and around Ukraine. The European Union condemns actions undertaken by armed individuals in cities of Eastern Ukraine. These attempts at destabilising Ukraine must come to an immediate end. We call on all parties to show utmost restraint and commend the Ukrainian authorities for pursuing their law and order operations in a measured manner, and we encourage the government in Kyiv to contribute further to reducing tensions.

We reiterate our strong support for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We urge Russia to recognise these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times, and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilise the situation and reverse the moves it has made that go against these principles. We demand Russia to call back its troops from the Ukrainian border, since their presence is intimidating and poses a threat, and immediately withdraw the mandate of the Federation Council to use force on Ukrainian soil. Any such threat or use of force against Ukraine, or any other participating State, is unacceptable and must stop immediately. We also reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of

Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and will not recognise it.

We support the work already undertaken by the OSCE Monitoring Mission which is of utmost importance in monitoring developments in Ukraine and we commend the Mission for its timely and factual reporting.

We once again call for all OSCE representatives to have safe and free access throughout Ukraine to fulfil their mandate. We reiterate that close cooperation between all relevant OSCE structures, as well as coordination with other international actors, is paramount to the OSCE's ability to act with urgency and consistency and to achieve the greatest possible impact on the ground in Ukraine.

It is of utmost importance that Russia and Ukraine engage in a meaningful dialogue with a view to finding a political solution, a solution that respects fully Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the right of Ukraine to decide on its own constitutional and political future. We hope that the meeting in Geneva today will provide such an opportunity and possibly start a process of substantial de-escalation. The European Union will do all it can to contribute to this dialogue.

We recall that any further steps by the Russian Federation to destabilise the situation in Ukraine would lead to additional and far reaching consequences on relations in a broad range of economic areas between the European Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation on the other hand.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Iceland+, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, Georgia and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

** the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.