



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 994

Vienna, 10 April 2014

EU Statement on OSCE Engagement with Ukraine

1. The European Union would like to thank the Chairmanship for inviting this impressive group of guests to the Permanent Council and providing this opportunity to discuss the OSCE's engagement with Ukraine. We warmly welcome all of you and thank you for your comprehensive presentations. A special welcome goes to the newly appointed Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Apakan.

Mr Chairman,

2. Right from the start of this crisis we strongly supported the efforts of the OSCE Chairmanship, the Executive Structures, including the Project Coordinator in Ukraine. We commend the Ukrainian authorities for their initiative to invite the OSCE and draw on OSCE expertise. We believe that the ongoing OSCE engagement in Ukraine is important and valuable and helps stabilize the situation and solve the crisis.

3. We called for an early deployment of an OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, including Crimea, and today we welcome Ambassador Kobieracki's presentation to the Permanent Council. We express our readiness to support an expansion of the Mission to draw on its full potential in light of the developments on the ground. The reports of the Special Monitoring Mission will provide an important factual and impartial description of aspects of the situation in Ukraine. We commend the Mission for its reports to date, including spot reports. The current situation underlines the need for regular, frequent and timely reports to participating States and the Permanent Council through the Chairmanship in a

timely and transparent manner. We encourage the Chief Monitor and Chairmanship to ensure there is also regular public reporting on the activities and observations of the Mission, including to media in Ukraine.

4. We note that the reports do not confirm the numerous claims made by the Russian Federation about violation of the rights of persons belonging to the Russian speaking minority and about violent acts, on part of Ukrainian ultranationalists, against Russian speakers in the South-Eastern regions of Ukraine.
5. We believe that these and other unfounded allegations are part of an information war, which is contributing to a climate of fear and confusion. This was rightly highlighted by High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors in her 4 April statement. We welcome her clarification that legally nothing has changed regarding the status of languages in Ukraine, despite allegations to the contrary. We strongly share the High Commissioner's concern about the precarious position of the people in Crimea, in particular the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian communities. We underline the importance of ensuring protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Crimea. This is an issue we will continue to follow closely. We also echo the High Commissioner in drawing attention to the valuable Bolzano/Bozen recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations.
6. We are pleased that the Human Rights Assessment Mission conducted by ODIHR and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, within their respective mandates, is now in its final phase and has been able to gather the necessary information for its reporting, including from visits to Crimea. We welcome the preliminary presentations today and we look forward to receiving the final report as soon as possible. We believe it will constitute an important element in establishing facts and identifying the needs on the ground.
7. We also welcome the deployment of ODIHR's Long-Term Election Observers. This will be an extremely important election for Ukraine and we commend ODIHR for organizing its biggest election monitoring mission ever. We encourage the

Ukrainian authorities to make every effort to ensure that the Presidential Elections on the 25th of May are free and fair, including through the promotion of conditions for a campaign environment that respects OSCE election-related commitments.

8. We welcome the activities of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in Ukraine. We reiterate our strong support for the many other ongoing OSCE activities in Ukraine, including the National Dialogue Programme and other relevant projects being implemented by the Project Coordinator in Ukraine. We support a strengthening of the Coordinator's Office and of its Mandate in order to adjust to the increasing demand for assistance.
9. 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, including those represented here today 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.
10. Finally, we would like to thank all the speakers for their strong engagement in Ukraine. We rely on your efforts, your public statements, and on your reporting that enables us to closely follow developments on the ground. You can count on our firm support now and in the weeks and months to come.

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 LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, 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.