



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 751 Vienna, 2 April 2014

EU Statement on the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union (EU) and its Member States took note of the report on the Danish-led Vienna Document inspection to Ukraine and of the statement by Ukraine raising awareness about intensified military activities of the Russian Federation in the Ukrainian region of Crimea. We also reiterate our concern at the increased Russian military activities along the borders with Ukraine and share the view expressed by Ukraine in this respect at the FSC meetings on 26 March and today.

We remain deeply concerned as well by seizure of the Ukrainian military bases and warships in Crimea by acts of armed assaults, including kidnapping of Ukrainian military personnel. We call on the Russian Federation to release Ukrainian soldiers and to return seized military equipment to Ukraine immediately without exceptions.

We appreciate the efforts of the Ukrainian delegation to the OSCE to provide further information after the observation mission of OSCE participating States set up at Ukrainian request under Chapter III of the Vienna Document had been denied access to Crimea repeatedly. We remain convinced that security concerns can only be effectively addressed and mitigated if all sides involved, including the Russian Federation, display an equally high level of transparency by fully implementing, not only in letter but also in spirit, all relevant politico-military commitments.

In this context, we take note of the information on Russian Federation's apparent decision to partially withdraw some of its military forces from near the Eastern borders of Ukraine. If confirmed by the Russian Federation and verified this would be a positive step which can help de-escalate tensions in these areas. We also acknowledge the professional handling and hosting of a number of observer missions recently, both under the Vienna Document and the Open Skies Treaty regime. These visits contribute to a better understanding of events on the ground and further measures should follow to defuse lingering tensions.

At the same time, we found the answers of several concrete questions raised both within the scope of the Vienna Document and the FSC pertaining to the Russian armed forces in Crimea unsatisfactory. We remind that the very purpose of the decision to establish the FSC in 1992 is to enhance regular consultations and to intensify co-operation among the participating States on matters related to security, and to further the process of reducing the risk of conflict.

We urge the Russian Federation to demonstrate full openness and transparency, also and in particular by hosting further voluntary visits under the Vienna Document and by sharing more information on ongoing Russian military activities in the areas bordering Ukraine, even if they do not fall under the provisions of the Vienna Document. This would clearly be a positive contribution to the re-establishment of a climate of trust and confidence between participating States. We encourage also all participating States to make full use of all OSCE politico-military instruments and stand ready to support continued Vienna Document activities to this end.

Finally, we reiterate that the European Union remains committed to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The European Union strongly condemns the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and will not recognise it.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association 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, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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