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**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 998
Vienna, 30 April 2014**

EU Statement on Ukraine

Mr. Chairman, the European Union welcomes the opportunity to again discuss the current security challenges in the OSCE area and OSCE engagement with Ukraine. We also welcome Ambassador Bišćević to the Permanent Council. Ambassador, we thank you for your report on the National Dialogue Project in Ukraine.

We are alarmed by the worsening security situation in Eastern Ukraine. The abduction last Friday of a group of impartial and unarmed military inspectors from OSCE participating States and their Ukrainian escort team conducting an OSCE Vienna Document inspection is unacceptable and we condemn this act. The inspectors and their escort team must be released unconditionally and immediately. We urge the Russian Federation to use its influence on the separatists and assist with the release of the inspectors, and Ukrainian escort team. We will come back to this in the afternoon at the joint meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation and the Permanent Council. We take note of the letter from the Russian Federation regarding this meeting and encourage the Russian delegation to participate in that meeting.

Over the past days, kidnappings, torture and killings continued in a number of places in Eastern Ukraine. We condemn the shooting of Mayor Henadiy Kernes of Kharkiv on Monday. A number of journalists, local leaders and ordinary citizens have been abducted, and continue to be held by armed individuals or have disappeared altogether. Those who wanted to demonstrate peacefully for the unity of Ukraine such as last Monday in Donetsk, face intimidation and attack by activists armed with clubs and

chains. We call for the release of all persons being illegally detained by armed groups in Eastern Ukraine, and for an end to the climate of fear and intimidation perpetrated by armed individuals.

Representatives from Ukraine, the US, the Russian Federation and the European Union met on 17 April in Geneva, and agreed on a number of important steps to de-escalate tensions in Ukraine. They also noted that the announced constitutional process will be inclusive, transparent and accountable, and we underline the importance of an urgent and broad national dialogue in this regard. Already on 17 April, immediately following the meeting in Geneva, Prime Minister Yatseniuk announced a major outreach effort of the government to regional and local constituencies throughout the country. We welcome the several substantive steps taken by the Ukrainian government to fulfil Geneva pledges since then. These steps include working towards constitutional reform and decentralisation, and proposing an amnesty law for those who will peacefully leave the buildings they have seized in Eastern Ukraine and who freely lay down their arms.

The Russian Federation, on the contrary, has as yet not shown public political support for the effective and faithful implementation of the Joint Geneva Statement, and has taken no concrete action in this regard.

We have heard on a number of occasions from the delegation of the Russian Federation that a broad based national dialogue on constitutional reform is a necessary condition for de-escalation. As indicated above, such steps have been initiated by the Ukrainian authorities. On Monday, we also heard the delegation of the Russian Federation state that there is no communication between the Ukrainian authorities and those requesting dialogue. However, if by those requesting dialogue the Russian Federation means armed separatists, and other illegal armed groups, it should be noted that they are destabilising Eastern Ukraine, refusing to accept the legitimacy of the

Ukrainian authorities, continuing to illegally seize administrative buildings, setting up illegal checkpoints, and are increasingly set on establishing a climate of fear and intimidation towards ordinary citizens who want to raise their concerns in legitimate ways.

If the Russian Federation is truly interested in dialogue between the citizens of Ukraine and their government in Kyiv, it should contribute to efforts to de-escalate tensions and use its leverage to stop violence, kidnappings and provocations, and make them hand in their arms. Unfortunately, we have not seen any concrete action in this regard. If the Russian Federation is sincerely interested in ensuring opportunities for all citizens in all regions to express their views, Russia should contribute to facilitating the best possible environment for holding the presidential elections on 25 May. Again, that is not what we experience.

The European Union thanks Ambassador Bišćević for leading the work on the National Dialogue Project and for sharing his observations and recommendations which we will study closely. The project underlines that the OSCE has much to offer in providing assistance and facilitating dialogue on the ground in order to reduce tensions in the short term and supporting efforts to strengthen national cohesion. This is also evident in the efforts of the Special Monitoring Mission and the assistance provided by other OSCE actors in Ukraine as well, including by the ODIHR, the HCNM, the RFOM, and the Office of the Project Coordinator.

The European Union reiterates its strong support for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and calls upon Russia to do so as well. 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 moves it has made that go against these principles. We

reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it. We also reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw the mandate of the Federation Council to use military force on Ukrainian soil.

As agreed at the Foreign Affairs Council of 14 April, the Council has yesterday expanded the list of persons subject to targeted sanctions for actions threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. 15 additional persons will be targeted with a travel ban and a freeze of assets within the European Union. This brings the total number of persons subject to sanctions by the European Union to 48. At the same time, we underscore that we remain committed to a diplomatic solution of this crisis and we urge Russia to commit to that path as well.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, 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 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.