



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 977
Vienna, 12 December 2013**

EU statement on Ukraine

The European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement by European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, issued in Kyiv on 11 December on recent events in Ukraine on Kyiv's Maidan Square. The statement has already been distributed to all OSCE participating States. Let me quote the following from this statement:

"I am deeply concerned about last night's action taken by riot police. I have been very much impressed with the peaceful and courageous nature of the ongoing protests in support of European aspirations. I condemn the use of force and violence - which cannot be the answer to peaceful demonstrations - and I call for utmost restraint.

I have come here to help. I have had several meetings with both Government and opposition leaders as well as civil society to see how to deal with the current crisis. In the long discussion I have had with the President he reassured me that he was prepared to engage in dialogue and I urge him to do so. He also reiterated his wish to sign the Association Agreement. I discussed with him the urgent need to release those arrested, to ensure a prompt and fair investigation, and to bring those responsible for violence to justice."

Mr Chairman,

In light of the worrying developments in Ukraine, we would like to reiterate what we stated in our closing statement at the Ministerial Council in Kyiv: "OSCE principles and commitments, including the right of freedom of expression and

peaceful assembly, as well as the safety of journalists, should be upheld without any reservation”.

We call on Ukraine, to fully abide by its OSCE commitments and, as Chairmanship-in-office of our organisation, to lead by example. The use of disproportionate force by police and security forces against peaceful protesters is a clear violation of those principles and commitments that all participating States must uphold. We expect that all sides will respect the rule of law and resolve their differences through dialogue.

We share the views expressed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhara, on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day in which he underlined the important role the OSCE can play in fostering co-operation between participating States in building a community with the highest standards of respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms, and the rule of law.

In addition, we stand ready to consider a facilitating role for the OSCE in Ukraine, using the toolbox and relevant mechanisms available within our organisation.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates ALBANIA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA 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 the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.