

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council No 1137
Vienna, 16 March 2017**

**EU Statement on the three year anniversary of the illegal
annexation of Crimea**

Three years on from the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, the European Union remains firmly committed to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The European Union reiterates that it does not recognise and continues to condemn this violation of international law. It remains a direct challenge to international security, with grave implications for the international legal order that protects the unity and sovereignty of states. It also contravenes Russia's commitments under the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter which lays down the normative foundation of the European security order. Moreover, Russia's illegal annexation violates the Budapest Memorandum and the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between Russia and Ukraine.

The European Union recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to recognise these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to reverse moves that contravene these principles.

We remain committed to fully implementing our non-recognition policy of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, including through restrictive measures. We call on OSCE participating States to consider similar non-recognition measures in line with UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262.

We condemn the significant deterioration in the human rights situation on the Ukrainian peninsula since its illegal annexation by Russia. As documented by

ODIHR, RFoM, HCNM and the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), political opposition in Crimea has been stifled and persecuted, civil society curbed, journalists silenced and people belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples, particularly the Crimean Tatar community, suppressed. Lawyers such as Emil Kurbedinov and Mykola Polozov, defending the rights of Crimean Tatars and of those who do not recognise the illegal annexation of the peninsula, were themselves presented with criminal charges. All allegations of violations of human rights, including torture, arbitrary detentions, disappearances and the denial of rights to freedom of expression, of assembly and association and of religion or belief must be thoroughly investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

On 18 March, High Representative and Vice President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, will make a statement on behalf of all EU Member States marking the three-year anniversary of the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. The statement will be circulated to all participating States.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and GEORGIA, align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.