



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 749 Vienna, 19 March 2014**

#### **EU Statement on the Situation in Ukraine**

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The European Union (EU) and its Member States took note of the second report on the observation activities of representatives of numerous OSCE participating States under paragraph 18 of the Vienna Document undertaken in the Southern and Eastern regions of Ukraine during the period 11 – 16 March 2014 as a continuation of the visit from 5 to 10 March 2014.

The visit set up at Ukrainian request under the Vienna Document Chapter III has once again clearly underscored the pressing need to use fully, in letter and spirit, the relevant politico-military instruments in order to dispel security concerns and de-escalate tensions on the ground. We urge the Russian Federation to follow suit and show the same level of transparency and openness as Ukraine has been doing. In this regard, we stress that the responses of the Russian Federation to the two Ukrainian requests for additional information under paragraph 16.1 of Chapter III were unconvincing.

We recall also that the visit had been consistently prevented by armed personnel from carrying out its duties in Crimea, in particular from dispelling serious concerns due to increased military activities by the Russian Federation in this region of Ukraine. We deplore the killing of a Ukrainian soldier in Crimea on 18 March and express our deep concern about its possible grave repercussions on the security situation on the ground. We call on everyone to exercise restraint in this tense situation to avoid further loss of human lives.

We would like to reiterate the EU's strong condemnation of the unprovoked violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and call on the Russian Federation to withdraw its armed forces to their pre-crisis numbers and the areas of their permanent stationing, in accordance with relevant agreements.

The Council of the EU strongly condemned the holding of an illegal referendum in Crimea on joining the Russian Federation on 16 March, in clear breach of the Ukrainian Constitution. The EU does not recognise the illegal "referendum" and its outcome.

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, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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\* 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.