



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1001 Vienna, 22 May 2014

EU Statement on the Violation of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation and the Situation in Ukraine

The recent developments in parts of Ukraine are of deep concern to us. Kidnappings, torture and killings continued in a number of places in Eastern Ukraine. Journalists, local leaders and ordinary citizens have been abducted by armed groups who have created a climate of fear and intimidation. Crime is on the rise and in some places the situation is chaotic and volatile as also reported by the Special Monitoring Mission. Instead of de-escalation, which was the aim of the Geneva Joint Statement, we have experienced the opposite.

Against this background, it is encouraging that the Ukrainian Government has begun an ambitious national dialogue. We welcome the first meetings of the Ukrainian-led and -owned national dialogue that took place in Kiev, Kharkiv and Mykolaiv. These meetings, which are supported by the OSCE, have provided an important platform for constructive discussions on issues of importance for the future of Ukraine, first of all topics relevant to the constitutional reform process. We welcome the wide spectrum of participants and the inclusive nature of the national dialogue. The national dialogue is further testimony to Ukraine's commitment to the Geneva Joint Declaration. We look forward to the continuation of an inclusive national dialogue in all regions of Ukraine. We continue to call on the Russian Federation to take effective steps with regard to fulfilling the commitments taken in Geneva.

We warmly welcome the Ukrainian Parliament's adoption yesterday of an important 'Memorandum on Mutual Understanding and Peace', calling for national unity and reconciliation.

We thank the Chairmanship for organising Monday's briefing on human rights in Ukraine. The briefing by ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the UN Assistant Secretary General, Ivan Simonovic, presented an impartial and bleak picture of the situation in Crimea and in some parts of Eastern Ukraine. It confirmed what we and other international actors monitoring the situation have been saying all along. That there was and still is no imminent threat to the Russian speaking population. And that it is the destabilisation of Ukraine by Russia and armed groups that has led to increased human rights violations and a more precarious situation for ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Tatars in Crimea. We regret that the Russian Federation refuses to recognize the realities on the ground and accuses impartial and independent institutions of being biased without providing any evidence.

We encourage all stakeholders to make full use of and implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Assessment Mission in Ukraine, including by drawing on the experience and advice of the OSCE's institutions. We stand ready to provide assistance to the Ukrainian authorities.

We remain preoccupied by the situation in Crimea, including in regard to human rights and rights of persons belonging to minorities. We deeply regret that the Crimean Tatars were banned from commemorating the 70th anniversary of the deportation of Tatars in Simferopol on 18 May. The banning of this event does not contribute to building trust and confidence among the communities in Crimea.

The rights of persons belonging to national minorities need to be fully ensured in line with the relevant standards of the Council of Europe and of the OSCE.

We remain deeply worried about the media freedom situation in Ukraine as outlined by the Representative on Freedom of the Media in her many press releases. We welcome Monday's meeting and signing of a Memorandum between representatives from the Russian Union of Journalists, Independent Media Trade Union of Ukraine, and the National Union of the Journalists of Ukraine organised by the Representative on Freedom of the Media. We believe such meetings are of crucial importance and we appreciate the agreement reached on steps to improve the safety of journalists, promote professional, ethical standards and build solidarity.

The EU continues to commend the work undertaken by the OSCE in Ukraine. The OSCE and the Chairmanship are playing an important and valuable role in promoting stability and contributing to a solution to the crisis. We express our strong support to these efforts and to the OSCE staff and observers that are doing an excellent job, sometimes under very difficult conditions.

The EU stands firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity 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 contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilise the situation and reverse moves that contravene 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.

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 countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, 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.