



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 989 Vienna, 13 March 2014

EU Statement on the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States are deeply concerned by recent events in Crimea and recall our statements to the Permanent Council on 6 and 7 March, in which we, inter alia: strongly condemned the unprovoked violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation; stated that these actions are in clear breach of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act; called on Russia to immediately withdraw its forces to the areas of their permanent stationing in accordance with the relevant agreements; commended the measured response shown by the new Ukrainian government; and urged Russia to agree without delay to the Ukrainian request to hold consultations.

We strongly regret that the Russian Federation has not taken steps to de-escalate the situation or to find a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the crisis, despite calls from the Government of Ukraine and the international community. The solution to the crisis in Ukraine must be based on the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, as well as the strict adherence to international standards.

The European Council of 6 March has decided to take actions in response to the attitude of the Russian Federation. In the absence of any improvement in the next few days, the European Union would decide on additional measures. Moreover, any further steps by the Russian Federation to destabilise the situation in Ukraine would lead to additional and far reaching consequences for relations in a broad range of economic areas between the European

Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other hand.

The decision by the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to hold a referendum on the future status of the territory is contrary to the Ukrainian Constitution and therefore illegal, as stated by the EU Heads of State and Government on 6 March, and expressed as well in the Chairperson-in-Office's statement on 11 March. We express our deep concern about the consequences of such an illegal and illegitimate referendum that will provoke further tensions, and deplore Russia's support for this illegal process.

Lately, we have witnessed increasing military activity in Crimea by the Russian Federation and a further deterioration of the security situation on the ground. The recent events indicate that the Russian Federation is trying to create irreversible, and very dangerous, facts on the ground. Tensions and divisions between the peninsula's communities are on the rise as a result of these actions. The previously calm relations between the communities are now characterised by a growing climate of fear, with the Ukrainian, Crimean Tatars and other ethnic minority communities being especially vulnerable, as described in the 6 March statement by the High Commissioner on National Minorities Ms Astrid Thors. We also note again that the High Commissioner found no evidence of violations or threats to the rights of Russian speakers. We also share the concern expressed by the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms Dunja Mijatovic, that media freedom is under siege in Crimea with extreme censorship and attacks, kidnaping and intimidation of journalists.

We subscribe to the view that especially in times of crisis people must have an unimpeded access to a plurality of media sources; otherwise they can be subjected to the worst kind of propaganda. In this regard, we share the

concerns expressed by the Representative on Freedom of the Media, in her recent statements. We also deplore any kind of state propaganda and hate speech as part of the current information war.

We reiterate once again our strong support to the efforts of the Chairmanship and the OSCE executive structures and we call on them and the participating States to fully apply the potential of the OSCE in the current situation.

We believe that there is an urgent need for an international presence on the ground throughout Ukraine, including in Crimea. We support the Chairmanship's proposal to proceed with the draft decision on the Deployment of an OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. We strongly urge all participating States to engage constructively with the Chairmanship's draft decision and express our hope that it will be endorsed by the Permanent Council before the end of this week.

The OSCE structures and representatives must be allowed to work unimpeded on the ground across the whole territory of Ukraine, including in Crimea. We reiterate our strong concern that representatives of numerous OSCE participating States under paragraph 18 of the Vienna Document and the Ukrainian escort team have consistently been prevented from carrying out their duties in Crimea by armed personnel. We strongly condemn these acts which are clear indications of the refusal to cooperate and dispel serious concerns due to increased military activities by the Russian Federation in Crimea.

The European Union welcomes the announcement of new OSCE activities in Ukraine, including the National Dialogue Programme and the Human Rights Assessment Mission. They are important activities contributing to stability, fostering dialogue, establishing facts and securing a coordinated and

effective OSCE presence on the ground throughout Ukraine, including Crimea.

The European Union applauds the courage and resilience shown by the Ukrainian people these last months and weeks, and stands by Ukraine in overcoming the current crisis. We will continue to follow developments very closely.

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, 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.