



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1050 Vienna, 7 May 2015

EU statement on 70 years since the end of the Second World War

World War II was one of the greatest tragedies ever to have afflicted the peoples of Europe and the world and took tens of millions of lives. The war brought about violations of human rights and freedoms, as well as crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. We mourn all those who lost their lives as victims of the war, the Holocaust, occupations, or acts of repression.

We pay our earnest tribute to the historic role of the allied forces and their sacrifices in the defeat of Nazism during the World War II. However, likewise, we should remember that the World War II brought about painful divisions in Europe. For many European countries, the end of the World War II did not bring freedom, but more crimes against humanity committed against their people.

An honest and thorough research on the history of the Second World War contributes to reconciliation. Given our responsibility, towards all victims, past and present, we should avoid using, for extraneous purposes, divisive and selected approaches.

Mr Chairman, on 9 May we will celebrate Europe Day. Too often one forgets why the European Union was created. The Union of today has evolved and adapted to contemporary circumstances, but the Coal and Steel Community, and then the EEC, were created with the hope that never again would Europe be destroyed by war. Today, the European Union is built on strong foundations of shared values and common purpose, rooted in freedom and democracy.

As we commemorate the victims of the World War II, we cannot forget that peace is still not a reality on the whole of the European continent. Russia's violations of international law and the fundamental principles of the UN and the

OSCE in the context of the crisis in and around Ukraine, including the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and its destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine have seriously harmed the vision of peace in Europe.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE 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.