



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council No 1066 Vienna, 3 September 2015

EU statement on Abduction and Illegal Detention of Ukrainian Citizens by the Russian Federation

On 25 August, the North Caucasus military court in Russia sentenced Ukrainian citizens Oleg Sentsov to twenty years imprisonment on charges of terrorism and Oleksandr Kolchenko to ten years imprisonment.

The EU has consistently followed the case of Mr Sentsov and Mr Kolchenko. Known to oppose the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia, they were arrested in May 2014 in relation to alleged activities conducted on the peninsula.

The EU considers the case to be in breach of international law and elementary standards of justice. The EU condemns Russian attempts to portray legitimate protests against the illegal annexation of Crimea as terrorism – based on testimonies that were made under controversial circumstances. The verdict of 20 years imprisonment clearly indicated the political character of the process and sentence.

We deeply regret the decision on 21 August by the Rostov-on-Don regional court not to move the trial of Nadiya Savchenko to Moscow. Conducting the trial in the Rostov region will significantly hamper access to the court for observers. The EU will, nonetheless, continue to closely monitor the trial of Nadiya Savchenko.

We call on Russia to respect its international commitments including those of the OSCE and release without further delay all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and on the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula, including Nadiya Savchenko, Oleh Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko.

The European Union recalls that all hostages and illegally detained persons related

to the conflict in and around Ukraine should be released as stipulated in the Minsk Package. We underline that Russia bears responsibility for the health, wellbeing and observance of the human rights of all persons it detains.

In this regard, we support ODIHR's expressed willingness to, in line with its mandate, conduct an assessment of the Russian Federation's compliance with human rights standards, including the right to a fair trial, in cases of particular concern. We also support that ODIHR continues to stand ready to assist the Russian Federation in the implementation of OSCE human rights and rule of law commitments.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, 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, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania 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.