

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1003
Vienna, 5 June 2014**

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

The EU strongly condemns the abductions of civilian observers from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts last week. We reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of the observers. We ask for all parties, in particular the Russian Federation, to use their influence to assist with this and to publicly call for their release at the highest political level.

This is an attempt at sabotaging the international efforts to assist Ukraine in overcoming the crisis, as stated by the Chairperson-in-Office Didier Burkhalter. However, our efforts will continue and we are determined to contribute to assisting Ukraine. We continue to strongly support the Special Monitoring Mission. It is playing a crucial role in Ukraine through its impartial and valuable reporting and was given a leading role in assisting Ukrainian authorities and local communities in the implementation of the de-escalation measures of the Geneva Joint Statement.

We commend the Mission's leadership for their tireless efforts in seeking the release of the observers and ensuring the safety of all staff in a very complex and unstable environment in parts of eastern Ukraine. We applaud the Mission's professional and dedicated staff, and we once again call for them to be allowed safe and free access throughout Ukraine to fulfil the mandate of the Mission.

Mr Chairman, we remain alarmed by the dire and volatile situation and the increasing deadly fighting in some parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts. Pro-

Russian armed separatists are continuing their violent aggression and provocations, and are creating chaos and anarchy in these areas. As a consequence, ordinary civilians are suffering; their safety is at stake as crime is on the rise and law enforcement limited or non-existing; their human rights are being violated; and their socio-economic situation is worsening as industries are being forced to scale down their activities and public infrastructure is being damaged.

All sides should enhance their efforts towards a political solution to the crisis and an end to the violence and tension in Eastern Ukraine. We repeat our call for full implementation of the Geneva Joint Statement. In particular, we call on the Russian Federation to publicly condemn the criminal acts of armed pro-Russian separatists, to call upon these groups to lay down their arms, and halt their criminal activities. Russia should withdraw its support to them, stop interfering in Ukraine and take urgent action to halt the flow of illegal arms and fighters into Ukraine across the border. We also reiterate our demand to Russia to immediately withdraw the mandate of the Federation Council to use force on Ukrainian soil.

Ukrainian authorities have the right and a responsibility to uphold law and order. We encourage the Ukrainian authorities to maintain a measured approach in pursuing operations to restore law and order.

We underline our continued concern regarding the deteriorating media freedom situation in Crimea and the two eastern regions of Ukraine. Only this week, the Representative on Freedom of the Media has again drawn our attention to cases of harassment against journalists. All such attacks must stop, be thoroughly investigated and those responsible held to account.

Mr Chairman, we are encouraged by the President-elect Petro Poroshenko's appreciation for the engagement of the OSCE in Ukraine, including with regard to fostering dialogue, as mentioned by the Chairperson-in-Office Didier Burkhalter after their conversation on 30 May. We are looking forward to the continuation of an inclusive Ukrainian-led and – owned process of national

dialogue with the participation of all relevant stakeholders in all regions of Ukraine and supported by the OSCE.

The EU expresses its strong support to the ongoing efforts of the OSCE and its Chairmanship. We continue to believe that the OSCE should use its full potential in the current situation.

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 country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, 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.