

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council No 1179
Vienna, 15 March 2018**

**EU Statement on “illegal conduct of Russian elections in
the autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of
Sevastopol”**

On 18 March, we mark four years since the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. The EU remains steadfast in its condemnation of this act which violates international law. We do not and will not recognise it.

We do not recognise the holding in the Crimean peninsula of elections by the Russian Federation, as this is Ukrainian territory. We remain committed to fully implementing our non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures. The European Union remains unwavering in its support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

We remain concerned about the ongoing human rights violations and abuses taking place on the Crimean Peninsula, including torture, arbitrary detentions, disappearances and the denial of rights to freedom of expression, of assembly and association and of religion or belief. In addition, the Crimean Tatar community has faced systemic persecution including the listing of their representative body, the Mejlis, as an extremist organization.

All allegations of human rights abuses must be thoroughly investigated and those responsible brought to justice. We also continue to call for the immediate release of all those who have been detained and sentenced in breach of international law. Access for international human rights monitoring bodies must be guaranteed in full respect of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU continues to call for the respect of human rights in Crimea and Sevastopol.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.