



EUROPEAN UNION

57th Joint FSC PC Meeting Vienna, 21 May 2014

EU Statement on Russian Unusual Military Activities and the Situation in Ukraine

The European Union and its Member States took note of statements by the Ukrainian delegation giving a comprehensive picture of the security situation in and around Ukraine, including unusual Russian military activities along the borders with Ukraine, and in the Ukrainian regions of Crimea and Sevastopol.

We took also note of the statements by the Ukrainian Ministry for Foreign Affairs regarding the military exercise "Aviadarts-2014" of the Russian Air Forces which coincides with an important juncture of the political process in Ukraine, namely the Presidential elections on 25 May. We share the concerns expressed by Ukraine since they testify to the urgent need for confidence building and refraining from actions prone to further increase tensions.

Therefore, the European Union calls on all participating States, particularly the Russian Federation, to make full use of existing multilateral mechanisms, not only in confidence- and security-building but also conflict prevention and crisis management.

We remain consistent in this message, since we believe CSBM and CAC mechanisms are as relevant as ever in acute crisis situations such as that Ukraine and the whole OSCE are experiencing now.

In this context, we keep urging the Russian Federation to demonstrate political will and make full use of its politico-military commitments, both in letter and in spirit, in order to restore trust and confidence in the OSCE area which have been severely damaged by its illegal annexation of the Ukrainian regions of Crimea and Sevastopol.

We see as priority areas in this respect commitments related to refraining from the threat or use of force, exercising strict restraint in carrying out military activities in the areas bordering Ukraine and providing verifiable information about on-going and planned military activities in those areas, even if they do

not fall under the provisions of the Vienna Document. In this regard, we took due note of the announcement of President Putin's order of 19 May regarding the return of Russian troops from training areas along Ukrainian borders back to their permanent bases.

Furthermore, we remain concerned, in particular in the context of the upcoming Presidential elections in Ukraine, about SALW and heavy weapons being possessed and used by illegal armed groups in Ukraine, as well as civilian premises being used as shields in combat. It is urgent indeed that the Russian Federation calls upon the armed separatists to lay down their weapons and to vacate the buildings they illegally occupy.

The European Union reiterates its demand to the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian border and immediately revoke the mandate of the Federation Council to use force on Ukrainian soil.

To conclude, we firmly reaffirm our support for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and call upon the Russian Federation to do likewise. The European Union reiterates its strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and will not recognise it.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA^{*}, MONTENEGRO and ICELAND^{**}, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members 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 Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

^{**} Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.