



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Special Permanent Council No 995 Vienna, 14 April 2014**

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#### **EU Statement on Current Challenges for Security in the OSCE Area**

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The European Union would like to thank the Chairmanship for reacting quickly to the rapidly evolving situation, even if we deeply regret that what is happening in Ukraine is leading us to hold this Special Permanent Council Meeting, at a moment when we are witnessing a serious escalation of an already dangerous situation in and around Ukraine, a threat to the security of our region. The EU Foreign Ministers are meeting at the moment to consider these dramatic events.

The European Union is gravely concerned about the surge of actions undertaken by armed individuals, and separatist groups in various cities of Eastern Ukraine; over the weekend they have seized administrative buildings including police stations and branches of the Ministry of Interior, and they have erected check points and these activities continue as we speak.

The European Union commends the Ukrainian authorities for pursuing their law and order operations in a measured way, in order to establish the authority of the State. We call upon Ukraine to ensure free and fair Presidential elections on 25 May as the best way to express the citizen's will. The EU looks forward to the work of Verkhovna Rada on constitutional reform, through an inclusive process and with the support of the Council of Europe, including its Venice Commission.

The European Union reiterates its strong support for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and calls upon Russia to do so as well. To this end, the Russian Federation is urged to call back its troops from the Ukrainian border and to cease any actions aimed at destabilising Ukraine. We urge Russia to engage constructively in a meaningful discussion within the Vienna Document on legitimate security concerns stemming from the Russian

military activities around Ukraine. We call upon Russia to revoke the authorisation given by the Federation Council to use armed forces in Ukraine.

The European Union recalls that any further steps by the Russian Federation to destabilise the situation in Ukraine would lead to additional and far reaching consequences for relations in a broad range of economic areas between the EU and its Member States, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other hand.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission plays and must continue to play a crucial role in actively observing and reporting about these developments, and thus in contributing to deter a further escalation of the situation. The Mission must have safe and free access throughout Ukraine to fulfil its mandate. We commend the Mission for its timely and factual spot reports over the weekend. We express our support to an expansion of the Mission and we encourage it to expand its presence in the areas of concern.

The Mission's reports show that groups of pro-Russian armed individuals, although limited in number, are professional, well-armed, well-equipped and wearing identical uniforms are conducting military-style operations against State Institutions. This is a pattern that is all too familiar, resembling the prelude to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol.

We once again express our strong condemnation of the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by the invasion, acts of aggression and the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. These actions are in clear breach of international law and of fundamental OSCE principles and commitments.

We reiterate the importance of Russia's and Ukraine's engagement in a meaningful dialogue. We look forward to the talks with Ukraine, the US, and Russia, scheduled to take place on 17 April. These should be the start of a meaningful dialogue which should contribute to de-escalating the situation in and around Ukraine.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\* and Iceland+, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as 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.*