



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1038 Vienna, 5 February 2015

EU Statement on the Illegal Arrest of the Deputy Chairman of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis and growing violations of Human Rights by the occupying authorities in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

The European Union is concerned by the further deterioration of the human rights situation in Crimea and strongly condemns the arrest of the deputy chairman of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis Ahtem Ciygoz on 29 January. We call for his immediate release.

The arrest of Ahtem Ciygoz represents the most recent act of persecution and intimidation of the Crimean Tatar community following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks already highlighted the persistent reports coming out of Crimea of serious human rights violations, including killings, enforced disappearances, severe physical ill-treatment and arbitrary detention following his visit to Crimea in September last year. So did the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in his Office's December 2014 report. These observations correspond to the information provided by the Special Monitoring Mission based on interviews with activists and IDPs. The SMM's reports point to a progressively deteriorating situation with persecution, searches and unlawful arrests as well as harassment and pressure on independent media. In this context, we also note the deep concern about media freedom in Crimea expressed by the Representative on Freedom of the Media on a number of occasions. Commissioner Muižnieks' view that it is essential to create a sense of security not only for the Crimean Tatars, but also for ethnic Ukrainians and those who have expressed critical views of recent political developments is therefore more valid than ever.

We reiterate our call on all parties to provide the OSCE including the SMM and the High Commissioner on National Minorities as well as international human rights actors with full, free and unrestricted access to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol.

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+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA 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 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.