EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council N°1079
Vienna, 26 November 2015

EU Statement on Abduction and Illegal Detention of Ukrainian Citizens by the Russian Federation

The European Union recalls that all hostages and illegally detained persons related to the crisis in and around Ukraine should be released as stipulated in the Minsk Package of Measures. We call on all sides to abide by this stipulation.

We call on Russia to respect its international commitments, including those of the OSCE, and release without further delay all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and on the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula, including Nadiya Savchenko, Oleh Sentsov, and Oleksandr Kolchenko. On 24 November, the Russian Supreme Court upheld the convictions of Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov and of his co-defendant Ukrainian activist Oleksandr Kolchenko, who were arrested in May 2014 in relation to alleged activities conducted outside the internationally recognised territory of Russia, in Crimea. The European Union considers the case to be in breach of international law and elementary standards of justice. The European Union continues to call on the Russian Federation to immediately release Mr Sentsov and Mr Kolchenko and to guarantee their safe return to Ukraine. We underline that Russia bears responsibility for the health, wellbeing and observance of the human rights of all persons it detains.

We will continue to monitor the trial of Nadiya Savchenko very closely.

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 country NORWAY, member 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.