



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1045 Vienna, 19 March 2015

EU Statement on Russia's Illegal Annexation of Crimea

The European Union would like to recall the Declaration by the High Representative of 16 March on behalf of the European Union:

“One year on from the holding of the illegal and illegitimate "referendum" and the subsequent illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, the European Union remains firmly committed to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The European Union does not recognise and continues to condemn this act of violation of international law. The illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation is also a direct challenge to international security, with grave implications for the international legal order that protects the unity and sovereignty of all states.

The European Union will remain committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures. The EU calls again on UN Member States to consider similar non-recognition measures in line with the UNGA Resolution 68/262.

The EU reaffirms its deep concern at the continuous military build-up and deterioration of the human rights situation in the Crimean peninsula, including the denial of free speech and the persecution of persons belonging to minorities. The European Union reiterates its call to provide international human rights actors with full, free and unrestricted access to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol.”

Mr Chairman, the OSCE has an important role to play in Crimea. We reiterate that the SMM as well as the PCU should be given access to the whole of Ukraine, including Crimea.

The autonomous OSCE institutions must also have full and unimpeded access to all parts of Ukraine, including Crimea. In this context, we welcome ODIHR's readiness to monitor the human rights situation in Crimea in continuation of the Human Rights Assessment Mission conducted jointly with the High Commissioner on National Minorities in March last year. Comprehensive international monitoring of the human rights situation in Crimea by the OSCE institutions, including of the situation of the Crimean Tatars and also drawing on reports from civil society and IDPs, is essential, given reports about the deteriorating human rights situation, including arrests, arbitrary detention and deportation of activists, and the denial of the right to free expression, and the right to peaceful assembly.

We share the concerns of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media over the repression of free media and independent voices we continue to witness in Crimea. As a most recent case, we join the Representative in calling on the *de facto* authorities in Crimea to immediately release Natalya Kokorina, a journalist and editor who was detained last week.

Mr Chairperson,

The OSCE was founded on the principles of dialogue and a respect for peace and stability, based on territorial integrity and sovereignty. We call on Russia to show through its actions a clear commitment to these agreed principles and commitments and we deplore the attempts, as happened yesterday in the Forum for Security Cooperation, to justify and legitimise the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol.

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, as well as UKRAINE 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.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.