



STATEMENT BY TURKEY
On Presidential Elections in Ukraine
(1002nd Meeting of the Permanent Council, 29 May 2014)

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Turkey welcomes the Presidential elections held last Sunday in Ukraine. We congratulate the Ukrainian people for demonstrating democratic and political maturity through their high voter turnout. It is a further cause for optimism that the elections were decided in the first round with the majority of the population converging on one candidate among many, representing a wide spectrum of political views. In sum, the Ukrainian people have given a clear and healthy sign of their will regarding their country's unity, stability and future.

The statement of preliminary findings and conclusions issued by the International Election Observation Mission leaves no doubt as to the transparent, free and fair manner in which the elections were conducted, with the exceptions not able to overshadow this reality. Given the extraordinary circumstances under which they took place, the overall compliance with international standards and our OSCE commitments during the elections is indeed a commendable achievement.

We believe that the robust democratic mandate thus given to the office of the President provides a singular opportunity to overcome the long-lasting crisis in Ukraine. A major component of the efforts in this direction will be a process of participatory and meaningful dialogue that reaches out to all segments of Ukrainian society and all of the country's regions. This national dialogue and constitutional reform process, which has already progressed through three roundtable meetings, will from now on be further reinforced by the political will and determination of Ukraine's new President and a more stable environment. As such we hope and expect it to ultimately provide a sound basis for a handshake satisfying the demands and concerns of all societal groups. During last week's Permanent Council, we had stressed the importance of two elements upon which tomorrow's Ukraine could be successfully built. On June 7th, when President-elect Poroshenko assumes office following his free and fair popular election, the first of those elements shall be in place. It will befall him and his Government to further the second necessary element, namely the broad-based and all-encompassing national dialogue and constitutional reform process. We happily have many reasons to expect this to become a reality.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Special Monitoring Mission is a crucial part of the OSCE's efforts to address the crisis in Ukraine. It has been meeting all our expectations. We reiterate our strong support for the SMM. We hope to see its potential tapped also within the Ukraine-led and owned process of

national dialogue. We are very pleased to learn that the Memorandum of Understanding establishing the status of the SMM and its members has just been ratified.

On the other hand, it is essential that the SMM operates securely and without hindrance throughout Ukraine. We are dismayed and deeply worried by the unacceptable abduction of two separate groups of SMM monitors in Eastern Ukraine this week. We strongly condemn these incidents. We express our appreciation to the SMM and its able leadership for their efforts which led to the swift release of the 11 monitors who were abducted yesterday. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of the four remaining monitors who were abducted on Monday. We appreciate all the efforts being made in this direction.

Mr. Chairperson,

While concluding, I would also like to take this opportunity to draw attention yet again to the plight of the Crimean Tatars. Owing to the illegal annexation of Crimea, the Crimean Tatars, like the vast majority of the Peninsula's population, were deprived of their right to take part in Sunday's elections and, thus, to share in the democratic expression of Ukraine's national will.

Let me once more emphasize our view that the de facto situation in Crimea should be settled through diplomatic channels within the framework of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity as well as international law including the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Thank you.