



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 27 May 2014

**Statement of the Heads of State or Government on Ukraine
Brussels, 27 May 2014**

1. Today we discussed the situation following the Presidential election on 25 May in Ukraine. We recall and reconfirm our statement of 6 March and our conclusions of 21 March. We welcome the holding of the elections as an expression of the will of the Ukrainian people. The presidential election was characterised by high turnout and a clear resolve by the authorities to hold what was a genuine election largely in line with international commitments and respecting fundamental freedoms, despite the hostile security environment in two eastern regions of the country. We call on all parties to accept the outcome of the elections and we look forward to working closely with the new President.

2. We stand firm in upholding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and we strongly condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and will not recognise it. We reaffirm the European Union's commitment to the Geneva Joint Statement of 17 April and commend the role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in assisting in its implementation, as well as the efforts undertaken so far by the Ukrainian authorities to implement it. In the light of the latest developments, we reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to take actions to fully implement the Geneva joint statement. We also fully support the complementary efforts of the OSCE and its Chairman in Office, while ensuring Ukrainian ownership. The efforts by all sides should aim at solving the crisis politically, putting an end to violence and tensions in Eastern Ukraine, including disarmament of all illegal armed groups and amnesty to those who have rendered their arms voluntarily and have not committed serious crimes. We note with concern the deteriorating human rights situation in Crimea since its illegal annexation by the Russian Federation.
3. We expect the Russian Federation to cooperate with the newly elected and legitimate President, to continue the withdrawal of armed forces from the Ukrainian border and to use its leverage on the armed separatists to de-escalate the situation in Eastern Ukraine. The Russian Federation should as a matter of priority prevent the crossing of separatists and weapons into Ukraine. In this context and with a view to consolidating a political solution, we encourage the Russian Federation to enter into a frank and open dialogue.
4. We encourage the Ukrainian authorities, building on the legitimacy of the newly elected President, to continue to reach out to the population and civil society of all regions of Ukraine, including in the framework of the round tables of national dialogue. We welcome the Memorandum of Peace and Concord adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament on 20 May. The swift and inclusive conduct of the constitutional and de-centralisation reforms, while drawing on the relevant expertise of the Council of Europe, is key in this process. Reform efforts as regards the judiciary, the prosecutor's office and the security sector as well as the fight against corruption need to continue. The European Union stands ready to support those efforts. The rights of persons belonging to national minorities need to be fully ensured in line with the relevant standards of the Council of Europe.

5. We will continue to lend our assistance to Ukraine to help stabilise the macro-economic situation and to conduct structural economic reforms. To this aim, a dedicated Support Group for Ukraine has been created by the Commission to help the Ukrainian authorities implement a jointly agreed European Agenda for Reform, in coordination with the Member States, international donors and civil society. We welcome the establishment of the European Union led international donors platform and the intention to hold, before the summer, a high-level coordination meeting in Brussels. Several measures have already been deployed, including the first disbursement of macro-financial assistance totalling now 1.61 billion euro and the signature of a State Building contract between the European Commission and the government of Ukraine.
6. We reiterate our commitment to enhance people-to-people contacts between the citizens of the European Union and Ukraine, i.a. through the visa liberalisation process, in a secure and well-managed environment and provided all conditions are met, in line with agreed conditions in the framework of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan. The Commission has put forward a report recommending to move to phase 2 of the visa liberalisation process with a view to granting visa free travel to the citizens of Ukraine once the visa liberalisation process is duly completed.
7. It is important that the Government of Ukraine improves the macro-economic balance and business climate, as well as eradicates corruption. International partners, including the Russian Federation, should contribute to these stabilisation efforts. It is important for the stabilisation of Ukraine's economy to reach an agreement on the conditions of the gas supply from the Russian Federation to Ukraine. We hope that the ongoing talks, facilitated by the European Union, will be concluded soon. We reiterate that the contracts regarding gas supplies from Russia to the European Union need to be respected.
8. We note that preparatory work by the Commission and the EEAS on possible targeted measures is underway and agree to continue preparations for possible further steps on that basis should events so require.
