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Catherine Ashton, Vice-President, European Commission,
and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,
European Council
Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy
Martin Schulz, President, European Parliament
Ministers of Foreign Affairs, EU member states
John Kerry, Secretary of State, United States of America

4 March 2014

**Statement of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on Russian military
intervention in Ukraine**

**EU should apply maximum diplomatic pressure on Russia to
immediately withdraw military forces from Ukraine, and join with
US to isolate Russia through tough trade sanctions if Russia
does not comply**

**Dear High Representative, Dear Commissioner, Dear President of the European Parliament,
Dear Ministers,
Dear Secretary of State,**

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum welcomes the conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 3 March 2014, namely the condemnation of the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by Russia, and the decision to take targeted measures in the event that Russia does not de-escalate the conflict.

We call upon EU member states and the European Council to apply maximum diplomatic pressure for the immediate withdrawal of Russian military forces to their permanent bases, and for an EU observer mission to be despatched to monitor the situation in the Crimea.

The military intervention contravenes international law and Russia's own treaty obligations to respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine. We call upon the EU and the US also to condemn the moves proposed this week in the Russian Parliament to change the conditions on which an entity can be annexed to the Russian Federation, a legislative step clearly designed to provide the Russian Federation with a means to stage local referenda to bypass the sovereignty of the government of Ukraine to annex Crimea and even other parts of eastern Ukraine.

These tactics are symptomatic of a series of Russian threats to Eastern Partner countries, both in terms of territorial sovereignty and trade relations, and we call on the EU to further strengthen its engagement with the Eastern Partner countries and support for their citizens' wishes for closer European integration and for the perspective of EU membership. The national platforms of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum have

condemned the Russian military aggression in Ukraine, and are launching a series of protest actions, including communication of their opposition to the embassies of the Russian Federation and calling on their own governments to condemn Russia's actions.

We also call upon the EU to apply pressure on Russia to recognise the interim government of Ukraine, and to support the holding of peaceful parliamentary and presidential elections in Ukraine in May this year.

We welcome the decision of the G7 leaders on 3 March 2014 to suspend their participation in activities associated with the preparation of the scheduled G8 Summit in Sochi in June 2014. Furthermore, we welcome the position taken by the United States of America in denouncing the "illegitimate" actions of the Russian federation in violating the sovereignty of Ukraine, and the decision to consider targeted individual and trade sanctions against Russia. We call upon EU member states and the European Council at the EU extraordinary summit on Ukraine, scheduled for 6 March 2014, to issue clear conditions, including immediate full withdrawal from the territory of Ukraine and recognition of the territorial integrity of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the breach of which will trigger sanctions.

The EU is the largest trading partner of Russia, giving the EU tremendous non-military leverage over Russian policy. If Russian military action is not halted and its forces not withdrawn within 48 hours, the EU should take a united stance and issue hard-hitting sanction, including the following:

- Withdrawal of participation of G7 members and the European Council and European Commission in the G8 summit scheduled to take place in Sochi, Russia, on 4-5 June 2014, and return to only the G7 format without Russia
- Refusal of Russian Federation's applications for admission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Energy Agency (IEA)
- Suspension of EU-Russia talks on visa facilitation and trade
- A freeze on all Russian state assets in EU member states, and of all assets in EU member states held by Russian companies in which the Russian state has any holding
- A freezing of all holdings and shareholder rights in EU member states of Gazprom and of other energy concerns owned by the Russian state.
- Suspension of any project aimed at increasing the EU's dependence on Russian energy supply, including in the first instance obligatory withdrawal from any commitments on new pipelines such as 'South Stream'
- A visa travel ban on, and freezing of assets of, all Russian government officials, including President Vladimir Putin.

The importance for a number of EU member states of energy imports from the Russian Federation should not be put before principled action against aggression by the Russian Federation in defiance of the independence of Ukraine. Furthermore, the Russian military intervention in the Crimea confirms that Russia is not a safe, reliable energy supplier, and the pipeline supplying Russian gas through Ukraine will be disrupted anyway as a result of Russia's military incursion into Ukraine.

As the EU is Russia's largest export market, the economic impact on Russia of the trade sanctions and self-induced isolation will be swift and heavy, and will send a clear signal that military aggression is unacceptable as a way of influencing relations with neighbouring countries.

Yours faithfully,

Steering Committee,

Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership