



Brussels, 26 March 2015

7685/15

PE 58
RELEX 273
CSDP/PSDC 182
COEST 108

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations
Subject: Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament
Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE), Brussels, 24 March 2015

The meeting was chaired by Ms FOTYGA (ECR,PL).

1. **Militarisation of Crimea and the security situation one year after the illegal annexation by Russia - Exchange of views with:**
- Ambassador Kostiantyn Yelisieiev, Head of the Mission of Ukraine to the EU
- Refat Chubarov, Leader of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis

Ambassador YELISIEIEV stated that since the breach of international law one year ago, violation of human rights, repression and the militarisation of Crimea had continued. In addition, Russia had continued to deny these facts. He stressed that the illegal annexation of Crimea was an international crime that had been planned in advance and had been coordinated by Russia. He called on the EU to review its sanctions against Russia only in the event that there was a return to the initial internationally recognised borders of Ukraine. He added that the EU should step up its sanctions. Mr CHUBAROV confirmed the Ambassador's assessment by describing the situation of the Tatar community in Crimea. He referred to persecutions, and the disappearances and unexplained deaths of Tatar activists. Mr CHUBAROV said that the worst forecasts had become reality: promised rights were never respected, economic prosperity was still absent and Russian repression was

ongoing. He called for a tightening of sanctions and stated that these should only be reviewed subject to a stabilisation of the situation. Both guest speakers stressed that the war against Ukraine had begun with the illegal occupation of Crimea by Russia and that Crimea should never be forgotten. They expressed their gratitude for the support shown by the EU.

The political group coordinators of the EPP, S&D, ECR and ALDE unanimously condemned the situation in Ukraine/Crimea and the violation of international law by Russia. They put a number of questions to the guest:

- on the issue of Russian forces on the ground (question put by EPP coordinator GAHLER (DE)), Mr CHUBAROV replied that most of the sophisticated missiles had been deployed in the north. Ambassador YELISIEIEV added that the militarisation and "nuclearisation" of Crimea was a major concern. Both said that Ukraine needed Western defence weaponry and Ambassador YELISIEIEV thanked the Member States for their help, enabling his country to have strong armed forces capable of resisting Russian forces.
- on the possible establishment of a land corridor by Russia (S&D coordinator PAȘCU, RO), Mr CHUBAROV explained that most of the Russian military systems were deployed at sea. As Russia needed a land corridor, there was indeed a threat, but he could not provide more details on the issue.
- in reply to a question put by the ECR coordinator TANNOCK (UK), both guest speakers said that the Jewish community, as well as other minorities, were leaving Crimea because of the oppression they were experiencing. The leaders of the Tatar community had called upon their members to remain despite the ongoing repression.
- As regards the role of Turkey which was raised by Mr TANNOCK, Mr CHUBAROV pointed out that Turkey was a member of NATO, and added that positive discussions were ongoing.

The four individual speakers (EPP and S&D) also condemned the occupation of Crimea by Russia and called upon the EU to stick unequivocally to its position and to remain united. There was broad agreement that the EU sanctions against Russia could not be lifted before the end of the illegal occupation and before Russia had demonstrated full respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity. Mr ŠTĚTINA (EPP, CZ) suggested that the EU needed to consider how it should prepare its military forces in the Black Sea. Some speakers stressed the importance of working closely with partners such as NATO. Mr FRUNZULICĂ (S&D, RO) expressed regret that the EU still had no strategy for Eastern Europe.

2. Debriefing of Mission to Kiev, Ukraine (18-20 March 2015)

The Chair reported that the EP delegation had met Ukraine's First Deputy Foreign Minister, the Defence Minister, the Secretary General of the President's security office, representatives of civil society and members of political parties. Some members of the delegation had also met the Prime Minister. During the visit, the EP delegation had been informed about the Ukrainian intention to ask for international peace keeping forces, a request that the EP would need to discuss. Mr GAHLER added that the ceasefire remained fragile and that Ukrainian soldiers had expressed their frustration about not being allowed to respond to military provocation from the other side. He felt that the EU should insist on full access of the OSCE observation mission to the entire Ukrainian territory. He and Mr FREUND (S&D, AT) said that this was the last chance for Ukraine to reform. Mr FREUND and Mr PLENKOVIĆ (EPP, HR) also reported that the situation on the ground varied depending on the region.

3. Next meeting

- 14 April 2015, 9.00 – 12.30 (Brussels)