



Brussels, 20 February 2014

BACKGROUND¹

Extraordinary FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Thursday 20 February 2014 in Brussels

In view of the situation in Ukraine, an extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council has been scheduled. It will start at 15.00 and be chaired by Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The Council will be exclusively dedicated to an in-depth discussion of recent events in Ukraine and the EU's reaction. All possible options will be explored, including restrictive measures against those responsible for human rights violations, violence and the use of excessive force.

European Council President Herman Van Rompuy has expressed alarm over the violent escalation of the political crisis in Ukraine and strongly deplored the human rights situation, including violence, cases of missing persons, torture and intimidation and the deaths and injuries sustained on all sides. He also condemned the unjustified use of excessive force by the Ukrainian authorities and ask to hold the responsible people accountable.

Time and again, the EU has reiterated the importance of an inclusive dialogue as a way of finding a democratic solution that would meet the aspirations of the Ukrainian people. A lasting solution to the political crisis in Ukraine could include constitutional reform, the formation of a new inclusive government and preparations for free and fair elections. The EU also offered expert support in all areas judged useful.

The EU remains committed to supporting Ukraine's economic reform course. On the basis of reforms led by a new Ukrainian government, the EU is ready to further pursue its efforts with international financial institutions to assist Ukraine, in line with well-established conditions.

In addition, the EU remains committed to signing the Association Agreement with Ukraine, provided the authorities demonstrate their adherence to a free, united and democratic Ukraine and to the values on which the Association Agreement is based. On 10 February, the Council expressed its conviction that this agreement does not constitute the final goal in EU-Ukraine cooperation.

In this context, the EU has reiterated the importance it attaches to each country's right to freely define its relations with other states in accordance with international law. Stronger relations with the EU do not come at the expense of relations between Eastern partners and their other neighbours.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions.

For more information:

*[Statement by the President of the European Council](#) on behalf of the European Council
[Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton](#) on the violence in Ukraine
[Council conclusions on Ukraine of 10 February](#)*

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office

P R E S S

[Factsheet on EU restrictive measures](#)

Press conference:

- after the Foreign Affairs Council

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