



Brussels, 17 April 2014  
140417/02

## R E M A R K S

### **Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Geneva meeting on Ukraine**

*" Thank you Secretary Kerry, thank you John very much. You have set out very clearly the discussions and the agreement that has been reached today. As you have said, these have been very frank and I think constructive discussions that are looking to find the concrete steps, real practical things that can de-escalate the tensions in Ukraine.*

*I think it was very important to bring us all together here to have that process of dialogue begin.*

*It has to be the first priority that we focus on a de-escalation of the situation and, collectively, as you have indicated, we have agreed a number of concrete steps that we can see implemented immediately – and the word immediately is extremely important in this context. We want to see this happen so that we can see things achieved.*

*The OSCE Special Monitoring mission will play a leading role in this: it will assist the Ukrainian authorities and local communities to take the necessary measures that they need to take.*

*We absolutely welcome the Ukrainian commitment to conduct an inclusive and transparent constitutional process.*

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780- [Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu) [@EUHighRepSpox](https://twitter.com/EUHighRepSpox)  
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - [Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu) [@AshtonSpox\\_Maja](https://twitter.com/AshtonSpox_Maja)  
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - [Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu)  
Eamonn Prendergast +32 460 75 32 93 – [Eamonn.Prendergast@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Eamonn.Prendergast@ec.europa.eu)

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*We know that free and fair Presidential elections on 25 May are the best way to express the will of the people of Ukraine, as is this process of constitutional reform. And we want to see all candidates behaving well and being treated with great respect in that process.*

*We remain committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.*

*In the meantime, the European Union will continue to support efforts to stabilise the situation in Ukraine economically, financially and politically.*

*Today, President Barroso of the European Commission wrote to President Putin on behalf of the European Union, accepting President Putin's proposal for consultations with Russia and Ukraine – trilateral consultations – on the security of gas supply and transit.*

*I end by saying that I believe that, by discussing constructively solutions and actions, that this is the best way to find a way out of the current crisis."*

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