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S T A T E M E N T

by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Eastern Ukraine

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"High Representative Catherine Ashton is following closely the worrying developments in Eastern Ukraine, including seizure of public buildings in Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk with use of force. She commends the Ukrainian authorities for pursuing their law and order operations in a measured manner.

The High Representative reiterates the strong support of the European Union for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. She calls against any further destabilisation of Ukraine, whether from the inside or the outside. Political demands should be addressed in a non-violent way through appropriate fora. Presidential elections next month need to provide a legitimate and inclusive platform for citizens to express their views about Ukraine's future.

It is also of vital importance that Ukraine's constitutional reform is comprehensive and completed without delay. The Ukrainian government needs to reach out to the population from east to west of Ukraine, and ensure that political processes as well as reforms reflect the regional diversity and respect human and civil rights.

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The EU stands by the Ukrainian government in its efforts to stabilise the situation. The High Representative continues the diplomatic efforts aiming at de-escalating the situation in Ukraine. In this context she will meet Foreign Ministers of the US, Russian Federation and Ukraine next week.

The Foreign Affairs Council will assess the latest developments on 14 April.
