

In the framework of Nordic-Baltic (NB8) and Visegrad (V4) cooperation, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the NB8 and V4 countries met in Narva on 6-7 March and issued the following joint statement:

The situation in Ukraine is critical. Against a European country an act of aggression has been committed by Russian military forces. Referring to the Statement of the European Council on Ukraine from 6 March 2014, NB8 and V4 Ministers condemn the unprovoked violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation and call on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its armed forces to the areas of their permanent stationing, in accordance with the relevant agreements. The Ministers call on the Russian Federation to revoke the decision of the Federation Council, which is a violation of international law.

We condemn the acts that have further aggravated the situation. The decision to hold an illegitimate referendum in Crimea on accession to the Russian Federation violates the Ukrainian constitution and, as such, is unacceptable.

NB8 and V4 countries are ready to support the Government of Ukraine in their pursuit of reforms and encourage decisions demonstrating their will to ensure inclusiveness, by providing the necessary assistance to build a strong, democratic society based on the rule of law and where human rights are respected, including the rights of national, cultural and linguistic minorities.

To help Ukraine in this period of transition, we support the establishment of a European Union led Observation Mission, which should be deployed as soon as possible. The Ministers welcome the OSCE monitoring mission. They also expressed support to all international efforts to facilitate solution to the crises.

The NB8 and V4 group reaffirms its strong support for Ukraine's, Moldova's and Georgia's goal of further association with the European Union and supports the signing of the Association Agreements in the nearest possible future.

The Ministers noted that energy is a critical part of Europe's security. Therefore, it is essential to accelerate the implementation of goals and activities to increase European energy independence and diversify energy sources. A concrete action plan to achieve this must be established as soon as possible.