

Joint statement of the Foreign Affairs Committees of the V4 Parliaments

31 January 2014

The representatives of the Foreign Affairs Committees of the Parliaments of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia had an extensive discussion on the situation in Ukraine on 30-31 January 2014 in Visegrád, Hungary, and issue the following statement.

Reiterating the declaration issued by the extraordinary meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group, we express deep concern about the dramatic development of events in Ukraine. We strongly condemn the violence used by government forces, which cannot be justified by any reason. As neighbours of Ukraine, we are convinced that the use of force cannot contribute to the resolution of political conflicts. A further escalation endangers the future of Ukraine and threatens to completely destabilize the country. We are also concerned about the role played by extremist groups on both sides.

We are convinced that the authorities, the opposition and representatives of civil society should all be guided by their historical responsibility to preserve a stable, democratic and unified Ukraine. We call upon the authorities to respect the right of Ukrainians to peaceful assembly and to the freedom of expression. The cancellation of the laws passed on 16 January is a promising first step towards a possible compromise. Eventually, only a genuine and meaningful national dialogue can offer a way out of the crisis and pave the way for the rebuilding of trust and lead towards a stable, democratic and prosperous Ukraine.

We emphasize the significant role of Ukraine in the community of European nations. We also support the hopes of the majority of Ukrainians for the country's European perspective.

We believe in the paramount importance of civil society and independent media. V4 countries are ready to further mobilize the International Visegrad Fund to finance projects supporting civil society in Ukraine.

Visegrád, 31 January, 2014.