For immediate release
4 September 2014

PRESS RELEASE
PR/CP(2014)0124

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE NATO-UKRAINE COMMISSION

As we meet today, Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence continue to be violated by Russia. Despite Russia's denials, Russian armed forces are engaged in direct military operations in Ukraine; Russia continues to supply weapons to militants in eastern Ukraine; and it maintains thousands of combat-ready troops on its border with Ukraine. These developments undermine the security of Ukraine and have serious implications for the stability and security of the entire Euro-Atlantic area.

We, the Heads of State and Government of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, stand united in our support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We strongly condemn Russia's illegal and illegitimate self-declared "annexation" of Crimea and its continued and deliberate destabilization of eastern Ukraine in violation of international law. We call on Russia to reverse its self-declared "annexation" of Crimea, which we do not and will not recognise. Russia must end its support for militants in eastern Ukraine, withdraw its troops and stop its military activities along and across the Ukrainian border, respect the rights of the local population, including the native Crimean Tatars, and refrain from further aggressive actions against Ukraine. Allies consider any unilateral Russian military or subversive action inside Ukraine, under any pretext, including humanitarian, as a blatant violation of international law.

Allies support the efforts of the Government of Ukraine, including through the Ukrainian Peace Plan, to pursue a political path that meets the aspirations of the people in all regions of Ukraine without external interference. Allies welcome the commitments made by all parties, including in Geneva and Berlin, and other ongoing negotiations to work toward establishing the conditions for a peaceful solution. However, despite the commitments it has made, Russia has, in fact, carried out direct military intervention inside Ukraine and increased its support to the militants. We call on Russia to change course and to take active steps to de-escalate the crisis, including to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the Ukrainian authorities.

Allies recognise Ukraine's right to restore peace and order and to defend its people and territory and encourage the Ukrainian Armed Forces and security services to continue to exercise the utmost restraint in their ongoing operation to avoid casualties among the local population.

Allies commend the Ukrainian people's commitment to freedom and democracy and their determination to decide their own future free from outside interference. They welcome the

holding of free and fair Presidential elections under difficult conditions and the signature of the Association Agreement with the European Union, which testify to the consolidation of Ukraine's democracy and its European aspiration. We expect that the upcoming elections to the Verkhovna Rada in October of this year, as an important element of the Ukrainian Peace Plan, would contribute to this end.

We welcome the actions of other international actors to contribute to de-escalation and to a peaceful solution to the crisis, in particular the OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe, as well as individual Allies.

In the framework of our long-standing Distinctive Partnership, NATO has consistently supported Ukraine throughout this crisis, and all 28 Allies, including through NATO, are enhancing their support so that Ukraine can better provide for its own security. Recognising Ukraine's intent to deepen its Distinctive Partnership with NATO, we are stepping up our strategic consultations in the NATO-Ukraine Commission. NATO has already strengthened existing programmes on defence education, professional development, security sector governance, and security-related scientific cooperation with Ukraine. We will further strengthen our cooperation in the framework of the Annual National Programme in the defence and security sector through capability development and sustainable capacity building programmes for Ukraine. In this context, Allies will launch substantial new programmes with a focus on command, control and communications, logistics and standardisation, cyber defence, military career transition, and strategic communications. NATO will also provide assistance to Ukraine to rehabilitate injured military personnel. Allies are reinforcing their advisory presence at the NATO offices in Kyiv. Allies have taken note of Ukraine's requests for military-technical assistance, and many Allies are providing additional support to Ukraine on a bilateral basis, which Ukraine welcomes.

NATO and Ukraine will continue to promote the development of greater interoperability between Ukrainian and NATO forces, including through continued regular Ukrainian participation in NATO exercises. Allies highly value Ukraine's ongoing contributions to Allied operations, the NATO Response Force and the Connected Forces Initiative. Allies welcome Ukraine's participation in the Partnership Interoperability Initiative, appreciate Ukraine's interest in the Enhanced Opportunities Programme within the Initiative, and look forward to its future participation.

With Allied support, including through the Annual National Programme, Ukraine remains committed to the implementation of wide-ranging reforms, to combat corruption and promote an inclusive political process, based on democratic values, respect for human rights, minorities and the rule of law.

As noted at previous NATO Summits, including in Madrid, Bucharest, Lisbon and Chicago, an independent, sovereign and stable Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law, is key to Euro-Atlantic security. We reiterate our firm commitment to further develop the Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine which will contribute to building a stable, peaceful and undivided Europe.