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Statement of the Crimean Field Mission on Human Rights on the need for international presence in Crimea

The human rights situation in the Crimean Peninsula remains difficult and disturbing, while it is increasingly falling out of the media spotlight. In a situation of conflict, the messages coming from there are contradictory and sometimes unverified, generating opposite opinions. However, the events in Crimea became a turning point and will long remain a source of political opposition for the entire Greater Europe.

Any opportunity to influence the situation will inevitably run into the almost complete absence of independent international monitoring.

The human rights organizations which worked in Crimea until the spring of 2014, as well as many independent media have been forced to curtail their work and leave the peninsula.

The access of international journalists and human rights activists is hindered by additional restrictions on the entry imposed by Ukraine, and the need to obtain a special permit.

The activity of official missions of international intergovernmental organizations is also limited due to the fact that Russia considers the territory of Crimea a part of Russian Federation and requires coordination, which, in turn, is unacceptable for Ukraine.

Since March 2014, the human rights situation in Crimea has been monitored by the Crimean Field Mission on Human Rights (CFM), a joint initiative of human rights activists from different countries, but its capabilities are limited by its status of a civil initiative.

Meanwhile, the human rights function of presence, monitoring, and, possibly, the reduction of the degree of tension and conflict is in great demand and cannot be performed exclusively by the civil society organizations.

The Crimean Field Mission on Human Rights considers it essential to ensure the maximum international presence in Crimea of institutions, special procedures and independent experts of the OSCE, the UN and the Council of Europe, whose mandate is to protect human rights, to monitor and assess the human rights situation in the Crimean Peninsula. The CFM appeals to the international intergovernmental organizations to provide such a presence, and is ready to initiate a discussion of its possible models.