

Joint Statement of Peak Councils of New South Wales
Eastern and Central European Ethnic Communities
on the escalating violence in Ukraine
and possible Federal Government response

On 5 May 2014 at a meeting of representatives of Peak Councils of a number of New South Wales Eastern and Central European communities, serious concerns were raised and affirmed on the alarming situation in Ukraine:

1. The crisis is very worrying to Australia's community of Ukrainian descent and also to Australians from other Eastern and Central European countries.
2. There have been a number of rallies and demonstrations directed at the Russian Consulate in Woollahra, NSW as well as the Russian Embassy in Canberra protesting Russia's interference in the legitimate functions of the Ukrainian Government.
3. There is real concern that the "laws" adopted by Russia's State Duma (Upper House of Parliament) of establishing a so-called Putin Doctrine of "defending the rights of all Russian minorities" in their so-called sphere of influence, may spread throughout Eastern and Central Europe. The practice of fomenting outrage at imaginary persecution of Russian interests tried out in Crimea and eastern provinces of Ukraine is to be condemned.
4. We acknowledge and commend that the Hon. Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has acted consistently with the USA, Canada and the European Union in strongly condemning the destabilising actions of the Russian Federation, in orchestrating infiltrators and misinformed locals, to occupy administration buildings under the guise of people spontaneously reacting to "objectionable, discriminatory and oppressive actions of the Ukrainian Government". We recognise also the strong stand taken by His Excellency Gary Quinlan, Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations, in demanding that Russia abides by the Geneva Agreement of 24 April 2014.
5. We therefore, as concerned Australians, sourced from Eastern and Central Europe, reaffirm our resolve to urge the Australian Government to:
 - a) Freeze any financial assets of Vladimir Putin and his entourage of oligarchs in our country Australia.
 - b) Fund an Australian team of monitors to augment other international monitors to oversee the running of any immediate elections in Ukraine, in all regions of the country.
 - c) Support the withdrawal of the Russian Federation in the G20 economic summit and lobby for support for such a move amongst the majority of the participant nations.
 - d) Take similar sanctions as the European Union to apply travel bans on a number of individuals associated with the Russian Government.
 - e) Declare the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Morozov, a *persona non grata* for spreading distortions of the situation in Ukraine and denigrating the actions and rights of the Government of Ukraine to deal with internal security.
6. We recognise that nothing should stand in the way of peaceful intercommunity relations between Australian Ukrainians and Australian Russians, and of Australia more broadly, in order to preserve social harmony.

Signed:

1. Mr Tom Beram Croatian Intercommittee Council for NSW
2. Mr Michael Darby Friend of Ukraine
3. Dr Ojars Greste Latvian representative of Joint Baltic Committee
4. Mr Bela Kardos OAM Hungarian Council of NSW
5. Ms Tiiu Kroll-Simmul Estonian representative of Joint Baltic Committee
6. Mr Fabian Lovokovic Croatian Intercommittee Council for NSW
7. Mr Yuri Mencinsky Convenor on behalf of the Ukrainian Council of NSW and the
Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations
8. Ms Nadia Namuren Ukrainian Council of NSW
9. Mr Ken Protas Australian Lithuanian Community Sydney
10. Ms Magdi Rozgonyi Hungarian Council of NSW
11. Mr Mark Shumsky Ukrainian Council of NSW
12. Mr Jozsef Tassany Hungarian Council of NSW