

Mr. Laurent Fabius  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
And International Development  
of the French Republic  
Paris, 75007,  
37 Quai d'Orsay

Paris, 21 May, 2014

Dear Mr. Minister,

The Open Dialog Foundation is a non-governmental organisation promoting human rights and supporting democratic processes in post-Soviet countries. Currently, we actively monitor the developments in Ukraine. Our continuous mission attended the Maidan during the demonstrations and is monitoring the developments on the ground in different regions of the country. We have already held several meetings with representatives of your Ministry, in particular, with Mrs. Sparasino-Teley, the Representative for Human Rights, and Mr. Fournier, the head of Continental Europe Department.

We have raised the issue of the current situation in Ukraine – from the revolutionary events in Kiev's Maidan, to the Russian aggression in the Crimea, to the ongoing efforts of the Russian government to destabilise the situation in the country. When presenting the reports based on the findings of our observers in Ukraine, we met with the Ambassador at Large for Human Rights, Mrs. Patrizianna Sparacino-Thiellay, and Mr. Eric Fournier, Director at the Continental Europe Department of the French Foreign Ministry among others.

We welcome the involvement of the French Foreign Ministry in the matter of Ukrainian crisis and your efforts aimed at reducing tension in the region. Today we address you in order to draw your attention to the issue which prompts particular concern in the context of the substantial deterioration of the situation in Ukraine and the evident role of Russia in the destabiilsation process in Ukraine: the

contract, signed by France, for the sale of two Mistral-class amphibious assault ships (BPCs) to the Russian Navy.

During this turbulent period, when each passing day brings increasing uncertainty, Russian authorities have repeatedly demonstrated their contempt for the provisions of international law, which has most clearly been demonstrated by the annexation of the Crimea. Thus, we hereby urge France to take firm action in order to cancel the contract for the sale of warships as part of the sanctions, imposed on Russia by France. This would also be consistent with your statement, issued in March 2014, in which you pointed to the possibility of cancelling the sale of the ships in the event of continued actions by President Putin aimed at destabilising the internal situation in Ukraine. Considering the ongoing development of events, as well as the presence of extensive evidence proving the highly negative role of the Russian Federation in the process of dividing Ukraine (including the presence of officers of the Main Intelligence Directorate and their control of the actions of armed groups of the so-called separatists), it is necessary to cancel the contract immediately.

The Open Dialog Foundation also calls for the cancellation of the visit of 400 Russian marines to the port of Saint Nazaire, scheduled for the beginning of June 2014. The aim of the visit of the marines is to undergo training in operating the amphibious assault ship Vladivostok – the first of the two Mistral-class units ordered by the Russian Navy.

In light of the decisions of countries such as Canada (immediate expulsion of Russian officers who had been participating in training and on study visits) and Germany (suspension of execution of contracts for the construction of a training centre for land forces by the Rheinmetall company), and, above all, France's membership in NATO and the EU, further implementation of the contract not only surprises us but concerns us greatly. Russia is implementing confrontational policy with regard to these international organisations, labelling NATO its main opponent. Supporting the Russian military forces has a strong and negative impact on France's credibility as an ally, as well as its long-term national interest.

We are aware of the potential costs that the French state and companies may be forced to incur in connection with the above-mentioned decision. However, such a decision would be fully consistent with the declaration of the French Minister of Defence, Jean-Yves Le Drian, who announced the suspension of military cooperation with Russia on 21 March 2014.

Therefore, we hereby appeal to France to take decisive measures bringing about an intensification of the sanctions imposed on Russia. It is absolutely unacceptable to take the risk that Russia be able to use the French warships, assembled in French shipyards, as well as the Russian marines, trained by France, in military actions in the nearest future which may pose a serious and direct threat to the sovereignty of Ukraine.

Mr. Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development, please accept the assurances of my deepest respect.

Yours sincerely,

Lyudmyla Kozlovska

President of the Open Dialog Foundation