

OSCE Will Not Observe 'Illegal' Crimea Referendum

By [The Moscow Times](#)

March 12, 2014



The OSCE will not send observers to Crimea's planned referendum.

The OSCE will not send observers to Crimea's planned referendum on whether the peninsula should join Russia because it considers the balloting to be illegal, the European security and democracy watchdog has said.

"In its current form the referendum regarding Crimea ... is in contradiction with the Ukrainian Constitution and must be considered illegal," the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said Tuesday in an online statement, citing its chairman and Swiss Foreign Minister, Didier Burkhalter.

Crimean authorities have invited OSCE observers to Sunday's referendum RIA Novosti reported Monday, citing the region's legislature. But the watchdog group requires an invitation from the national administration to consider sending observers, the OSCE said.

Ukraine's government in Kiev considers Crimea's Moscow-backed referendum illegitimate, as do Western countries.

On Tuesday, the European security body said an unarmed OSCE military observer mission would travel to other parts of Ukraine in the coming days, including the country's east, after being repeatedly refused entry to Crimea.

Tuesday marked the third straight day that the OSCE mission had been turned back while trying to cross the narrow isthmus connecting the isolated Black Sea peninsula to the rest of Ukraine.

A spokesman said that the mission might try to visit the peninsula again, but indicated that the visit would have nothing to do with the planned referendum, Reuters reported.

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