

# *Thousands Hold Pro-Russia Demo in Eastern Ukraine*

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Sevastopol, March 7 (RHC)-- Thousands of people have demonstrated in Ukraine's port city of Sevastopol to show their support for Crimea's plan to join Russia. Waving Russian flags and chanting "Russia, Russia, Russia," the demonstrators on Thursday expressed their support for the autonomous Crimea region's bid to secede from Ukraine.

Lawmakers in Crimea unanimously declared they wanted to join Russia and would put the decision to voters in 10 days. The new Ukrainian government, however, has declared the planned vote illegal, and opened a criminal investigation against Crimean Prime Minister Sergei Askonov.

Russia sent its troops to Crimea after the Russian parliament gave the green light to President Vladimir Putin to use armed forces "to protect Russia's interests in that region."

In a statement on Tuesday, the Russian Foreign Ministry said that Moscow would have to respond in such situations that are provoked by "Washington's rash and irresponsible actions."

Ukraine has been gripped by unrest since November 2013, when the ousted president, Viktor Yanukovich, refrained from signing an Association Agreement with the European Union in favor of closer ties with Russia.



**Radio Habana Cuba**