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Crimean Voters Back Joining Russian Federation

By Jason Ditz

March 16, 2014

With a turnout of around 64% and glares of disapproval from the Western world, Crimean voters went out today to vote in a referendum on whether to rejoin Ukraine or seek accession into the Russian Federation. As expected, they overwhelmingly chose the later.



Exit polling showed 93 percent in favor of joining Russia among voters. The turnout figures and the overwhelming result suggest ethnic Russians, a strong majority in Crimea, dominated the vote while opponents like the Tatar minority stayed at home.

The debate over whether or not to join the Russian Federation broke down largely along racial lines, with the US and EU, now backing the interim government in Ukraine, insisting they wouldn't recognize the result of the referendum.

Whether they recognize it or not, however, the vote is in and the next step is Russia's to take. Though President Putin has expressed reservations about annexing Crimea, many in the Russian parliament have strongly supported the idea, and with the vote behind them, it seems likely to happen in a fairly expedited manner.