



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement on the Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom in Ukraine

As delivered by Ihor Lossovskiy,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1156th meeting of the Permanent Council,
31 August 2017

Mr. Chairperson,

Ukraine is firmly committed to safeguard and promote the freedom of expression and media freedom in the country in accordance with the relevant OSCE commitments and international standards. On many occasions we updated the OSCE participating States about specific and important steps undertaken in the area of strengthening the environment for free media. The Ukrainian authorities closely cooperate with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media which provides valuable expertise and assistance in enhancing the implementation of relevant commitments.

Today we continue to witness an information war of Russian state-controlled media aimed at destroying peace and security in Ukraine. Anti-Ukrainian falsifications by the Russian media defy norms of journalistic ethics and human morality, crudely incite inter-ethnic hatred. The Russian state media are being widely utilized by the Russian authorities to disseminate propaganda, incite violence and promote aggressive nationalism and chauvinism, which runs counter to a number of the OSCE principles and commitments, including those of the 2002 Porto Document.

Responding to today's claims by the Russian delegation concerning the limitations imposed by the Ukrainian authorities on certain Russian journalists, we wish to point out that it is both the duty and right of every state to defend itself from an external aggression. The international standards in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms provide for a possibility of limitations in the interests of protection of national security and public order. Such provisions are enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 19) and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Article 10). These provisions are fully applicable in the situations of "hybrid warfare", including armed aggression, against a sovereign state as is the case of Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Distinguished colleagues,

In this context we wish to sharpen the attention of all participating States on the emphasis placed by the Russian military on information resources as “one of the most effective types of weapon” and “falsification of events and restricting the functioning of the media” as the “main component of hybrid warfare”. These quotations belong to the Chief of General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces. It must be recalled that the immediate measures which followed Russia’s intervention into the Crimea and Donbas included the cut-off of Ukrainian TV broadcasters and switch to Russia’s state media as well as severe restrictions on operation of independent media and journalists.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.