



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

PC.DEL/4/18
11 January 2018

ENGLISH only

**Statement in response to the address by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office,
Minister for Foreign Affairs and International
Cooperation of Italy Angelino Alfano**

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1171st special meeting of the Permanent Council,
11 January 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

Ukraine warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Angelino Alfano. We thank him for presenting a comprehensive outline of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship priorities for 2018 and wish success in steering the work of the Organisation in the course of the year.

We commend the determination of the Italian Chairmanship to focus the attention of the OSCE on implementation of its fundamental principles and commitments. Indeed, the flagrant breach of the basic norms of the OSCE and the international law by the Russian Federation since 2014 has given rise to the worst security crisis in Europe and re-emergence of attempted annexation of part of territory of one country by another country for the first time since World War II. Aggression and use of force for territorial acquisition cannot and must not be accepted or tolerated in the XXI century Europe. As we hear from some quarters the calls for building a positive and unifying agenda for this Organisation, we would strongly insist that ensuring respect for the core principles and norms of the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter is an impressively positive agenda that belongs to *raison d'être* of the OSCE and forms a prerequisite for peace and security in Europe. Witnessing clear, gross and continuing violations of OSCE principles and commitments, we would again recall the commitment undertaken by the participating States at the Istanbul Summit to explore ways to increase the OSCE's effectiveness in dealing with such cases. We encourage the Italian Chairmanship to launch respective discussions.

Mr. Minister, as emphasized by the overwhelming majority of delegations in this hall in the last four years and reaffirmed in the debates at the recent Ministerial Council in Vienna, the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine remains the most pressing security threat that has a broad-ranging destabilizing impact on the entire OSCE area. We commend the Italian OSCE Chairmanship for placing the highest priority on this challenge. We look forward to the announced visit of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to Ukraine at the end of this month.

Millions of people continue to live under Russia's temporary occupation in Crimea and parts of Donbas, experiencing daily massive abuses of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Dozens of Ukrainian civilians and servicemen continue to be killed and wounded every month. The Russia-led forces continue shellings and provocations in Donbas after the most recent recommitment to the ceasefire, which was reached within the Trilateral Contact Group on the eve of winter holidays. In the previous 24 hours, three Ukrainian servicemen lost their lives, and four were wounded. While welcoming the recent long-awaited release by Moscow and its proxies of 74 hostages on 27 December, we should remember that over one hundred Ukrainian citizens remain captive in parts of Donbas which are effectively controlled by Russia. Dozens of Ukrainian political prisoners remain in detention under fabricated charges on the territory of the Russian Federation and in the temporarily occupied Crimea. Parts of Donbas and the Crimean peninsula continue to be transformed into the military outposts of the Russian Federation in Europe and the "grey zones" for human rights and freedoms.

Mr. Minister,

The decisions taken in Moscow four years ago started the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it requires decisions to be taken in Moscow to put an end to this conflict. It remains critically important to maintain and build up politico-diplomatic pressure on Russia to make it fully implement the undertaken Minsk commitments and to return the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to Ukraine where they belong.

The OSCE has an important role to play in facilitating the process of resolution of the conflict, in particular through the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the OSCE autonomous institutions. Five separate provisions of the Minsk agreements assign specific roles to the OSCE, but they are fulfilled only partially or not at all because of impediments and restrictions set by the Russian side, including with regards to ensuring permanent monitoring and verification at the Ukrainian-Russian state border. We encourage the Italian Chairmanship to use fully the toolbox of this Organisation to enable implementation of the prescribed functions.

The SMM has enjoyed and will enjoy the support of Ukraine as the Mission strives to effectively perform its mandate, in particular under limitations and strict conditions imposed in Russia-controlled parts of Donbas. The Mission will require continuous strong backing of all actors – the OSCE Chairmanship, the Secretariat and the CPC, the participating States – to seek marked improvement of its operational environment in the non-government controlled areas where Russia must deliver on its responsibilities. This environment is characterized in the last year's refusal of the Russian delegation in Vienna, citing instructions from the capital, to include condemnation of any attempt of harassment or intimidation of SMM monitors in the text of the Declaration of support for the SMM adopted by the Permanent Council in April 2017. Last month's unilateral withdrawal by the Russian Federation of its officers from the JCCC, unfortunately, further increased the risks to the SMM's monitors and mandated activity in the non-government controlled areas of Donbas.

Mr. Chairperson,

Italy can rely on Ukraine's support for the efforts of seeking collective responses to other significant multifaceted challenges affecting European security.

Ukraine, as a mediator and guarantor in the Transdniestrian settlement process, stands ready to further contribute to achieving a sustainable solution to this conflict with full respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova in its internationally recognized borders and in line with norms and principles of international law.

We will support efforts aimed at political resolution of the protracted conflicts on the territories of Georgia and the Republic of Azerbaijan with full respect to their sovereignty and territorial integrity within their internationally recognized borders.

We will continue our active participation in the OSCE efforts focusing on implementation of commitments in the political-military dimension and aiming at increasing transparency and military predictability.

In the joint fight against terrorism particular attention should be given to the issues of financing of terrorism and preventing cross-border movement of persons, weapons and funds connected to the terrorist and illegal armed groups' activities. Strengthening border security, cyber security, countering the phenomena of foreign terrorist fighters and other non-state actors should feature prominently in our work in the first dimension.

We take note of Italian OSCE Chairmanship priorities in the economic and environmental dimension, which is an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. The respective activities need to be linked to the security mandate of the Organisation. We encourage the Italian Chairmanship to actively promote the good-governance agenda and to explore ways of enhancing response to environmental challenges to security arising from armed conflicts and their implications for the local civilian population.

Mr. Minister,

We fully share your vision of the link between the protection of fundamental rights and the pursuit of peace, security and prosperity. As a country facing complex humanitarian challenges as a result of external hybrid aggression, Ukraine views as the topics of utmost relevance the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the situations of occupation, the challenges of the internally displaced persons, combating torture and enforced disappearance, eradication of phenomenon of political prisoners. We should also aim at seriously addressing the challenges that materialized from sophisticated state-sponsored propaganda campaigns of disinformation and destabilization of free and democratic societies in Europe. We hope that the Italian Chairmanship will see the topic of hybrid warfare among the key areas of the OSCE activities in 2018.

In conclusion, we sincerely thank Minister Alfano for being with us today, wish him as the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and the Chairmanship's team every success in their activities and look forward to our close cooperation in the course of the year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.