



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Opening Statement
by Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya, Deputy Minister
for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Head of the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 2017 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(Warsaw, 11 September 2017)

Madam Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Delegation of Ukraine is grateful to the ODIHR and the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship for organizing the 2017 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. Our special thanks go to our Polish friends for their warm hospitality.

We entered a new era in 2014, when international legal norms and principles, including Helsinki principles, pertaining to states' sovereignty and territorial integrity, were blatantly violated by one OSCE participating State. To our deep regret, this era is not a cold war, but a real hot war on the European continent.

The OSCE has also found itself in the new epoch, following the appointment of the new OSCE leadership and the new heads of OSCE institutions. Perhaps in a clever design all 57 members entered today's meeting through a tunnel. Let us hope that under the new OSCE institutions leadership, guided by the Swiss Secretary-General our way to the light at end of the tunnel will be shorter than the longest European tunnel of 57 kilometres of Gotthard Base.

I wish to thank the predecessors for their dedicated work. We are grateful to Ambassador Lamberto Zannier for his commitment to promoting OSCE effectiveness as Secretary General in the past few years and welcome to this important position Ambassador Thomas Greminger, who has our full support. Ukraine greatly appreciates the courage and integrity of the Representative on Freedom of the Media Ms. Dunja Mijatović, who set the highest standards of work for her successors. We are also glad that Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, a person of high integrity and quality, succeeded very able Mr. Michael Link as ODIHR Director. We regret that the participating States were not able to re-appoint Ms. Astrid Thors as High Commissioner on National Minorities in 2016 and this important institution was left

without management for nearly one year due to an unconstructive position of one OSCE delegation. Today we are confident that profound experience and high professionalism of Ambassador Zannier as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities will contribute to strengthening this important OSCE conflict prevention tool in the next three years.

At present the OSCE and the whole European security order are under the biggest attack from one country. Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol remain occupied by Russia. Russian military and illegal armed groups, which Russia backs and arms, continue to operate in Donbas, killing Ukrainian servicemen and peaceful civilians.

Over three years of illegal occupation of Crimea have been marked by blatant violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Crimean population. It must remain our priority to seek, by all available instruments, the permanent monitoring and presence in Crimea of established human rights monitoring mechanisms of the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe and other international organizations. This must be done in compliance with the UN GA Resolutions 68/262 "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine" and 71/205 "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)".

We call on the OSCE institutions to use all possibilities to secure the immediate release of the illegally detained Ukrainian citizens – political prisoners in Russia, including Oleh Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Stanislav Klykh, Mykola Karpyuk and Roman Sushchenko, as well as Akhtem Chygoz, Mykola Semena in the occupied Crimea. The most recent case of 19-year-old Ukrainian Pavlo Gryb, who was kidnapped on the territory of the Republic Belarus and transferred to the detention facility in the Russian Federation, has become yet another appalling example of Russia's state policy of abduction and hostage-taking, which should not have a place in the OSCE area. Today, the Russian occupation authorities sentenced a Ukrainian citizen, a Crimean Tatar Mr. Akhtem Chygoz to 8 years in a strict regime colony. It is surely a cynical, well-timed grin addressed to all of those who gathered today to discuss human rights in the OSCE area.

Distinguished participants,

We have to admit that the OSCE and the then existing European security architecture were unable to prevent and stop military aggression, occupation and annexation of a part of territory of one participating State by another participating State.

Having said that, OSCE nevertheless remains an extremely useful organization. We highly value the role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine under the skilful guidance of Ambassador Apakan, which remains the only real monitor in the territory of the occupied Donbas, observing and documenting the abhorrent human rights violations taking place there. We regret that the OSCE has never been consulted on the Russian proposal calling for an establishment of a "UN Mission on Support in Protecting the SMM OSCE", which clearly shows Russia's open disrespect towards the OSCE.

In contrast, my country highly appreciates the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine commitment to assist the Government of Ukraine in advancing its reform agenda,

transparently and accountably, through the implementation of numerous projects, which cover the whole array of topics under the review during the HDIM thematic sessions, as well as supporting cooperative efforts between the government and the civil society.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to remind you that the UN General Assembly in its resolution of December 2016 “Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)” established the facts, and based on these facts it told the unequivocal truth: Russia is an occupying power. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was also very articulate about Russia’s aggressive actions, acknowledging the truth: Russia violated all Helsinki principles.

I hope that the discussion that we will have in the next two weeks will not be a post-truth discussion, framed by appeals to emotion and personal belief disconnected from objective facts. I call upon you to have a genuine debate, where the truth, based on the facts, prevails.

Ultimately, this is about our common values of human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms, which remain at the core of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security.

Thank you.