



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement in response to
H.E. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Director of the OSCE Office
for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1178th meeting of the Permanent Council,
8 March 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

Ukraine warmly welcomes the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights H.E. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir back to the Permanent Council and thanks for presentation of the report on the Office's activities in 2017 and plans for the current year.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm Ukraine's support for ODIHR's mandate and activities to promote human rights and democracy across the entire OSCE region and assist the participating States in the implementation of their human dimension commitments. These commitments are central to protection of human rights and dignity and are to be decisively upheld by the OSCE and its Institutions.

Despite the ongoing armed aggression against Ukraine from a neighbouring OSCE participating State and resulting unprecedented security challenges, my country stays committed to the chosen course of profound transformations consolidating democracy, good-governance, rule of law and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Ukraine's significant progress in the last four years is well registered in numerous independent assessments. We appreciate the ODIHR's assistance in implementation of the reforms. Strengthening co-ordination of Office's project activities with relevant Ukrainian authorities as well as the OSCE field missions and other actors in Ukraine is to be considered with a view to enhancing the positive impact and effectiveness of co-operation.

Madame Director,

Every week in the Permanent Council we raise the issues of gross human rights violations, oppression and persecutions in the territories of Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. Four years of illegal occupation of Crimea and parts of Donbas by Russia have been marked by a sharp deterioration of the human rights situation, including abductions, torture and enforced disappearances, repressive measures that primarily target pro-Ukrainian activists, members of Crimean Tatar

community and all those who dare to disagree with the occupation and policies of occupation administrations. Specific Resolutions on the human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2016 and 2017, but their provisions are defied by the Russian occupation authorities. In April of last year the International Court of Justice ordered measures to be taken by the Russian Federation, which until now remain unimplemented. Access and permanent international human rights monitoring are denied in the occupied Crimea, whereas the serious human rights violations persist and those committed earlier remain unaddressed. We wish to ask the Director of ODIHR about what and how her Office can do more to monitor the human rights situation in Crimea and react, together with other international organisations, to repressions and violations in an expeditious manner?

Currently over 60 Ukrainian citizens are in captivity of the Russian authorities as hostages facing fabricated charges, are subjected to ill-treatment and torture, are denied their rights to a fair trial. We would be interested to hear from ODIHR Director about mechanisms that could be used to relieve these people of their sufferings and facilitate their immediate release.

It is essential to make sure that the situations of occupation and glaring human rights violations that take place there do not escape the constant attention of the OSCE community. We count on the full use by ODIHR of its mandate in this regard.

We also once again emphasize that all responsibility for human rights violations in the Russia-occupied regions of Ukraine and the failure to stop them rests with the Russian Federation as the occupying power.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia's flagrant breach of the established norms and principles in relations between states cannot be viewed in isolation from Russia's steadily growing disrespect for its OSCE human dimension commitments, including on observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, tolerance and non-discrimination.

The independent human rights organizations assess the current climate to be the most oppressive in the history of modern Russia and having resemblance with the heinous practices of the Soviet totalitarian regime. "Harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders and independent NGOs continued", "cultural rights were reduced, including through reprisals and self-censorship", "religious minorities continued to face harassment and persecution", "torture and other ill treatment persisted", "LGBTI people continued to face discrimination and violence; gay men in Chechnya were targeted through a coordinated campaign of abduction, torture and killings by the Chechen authorities" – these are just few quotations concerning Russia from the recent report of Amnesty International.

We would be interested to hear from the ODIHR Director whether the Office offered its assistance to the Russian authorities to help them address non-compliance with a variety of undertaken commitments or offered to impartially oversee the investigation into allegations of extrajudicial execution of a large number of people in Chechnya or to monitor the trials there. Proactive engagement of the ODIHR with the Russian authorities and civil society are necessary, in our view, to arrest extremely

worrying tendencies in that country that pose significant risks to the Russian society and societies beyond Russia's borders.

Director Gísladóttir,

We do expect that the present ODIHR Election Observation Mission in Russia will act fully in line with the OSCE principles and commitments as well as strictly comply with the provisions of the UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262 "Territorial integrity of Ukraine" on non-recognition of any alteration of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as integral parts of Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me conclude by reiterating Ukraine's resolve to adhere to undertaken OSCE human dimension commitments, as well as our support for ODIHR's mandate.

We once again thank you, Director Gísladóttir, for your report, wish every success to you and your team and would appreciate your comments on the questions posed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.