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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1258th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 February 2020

**In response to the reports by the Special Representative of the OSCE  
Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group,  
Ambassador Heidi Grau, and the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring  
Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Yaşar Halit Çevik**

Madam Chairperson,

We welcome the distinguished Ambassadors Heidi Grau and Yaşar Halit Çevik. The reports presented today confirm that the situation regarding the settlement of the crisis in Ukraine is extremely difficult, but not hopeless.

The paralysis of political will being demonstrated by the Ukrainian Government in its implementation of the Minsk agreements verges on deliberate sabotage of its obligations. Instead of their implementation in good faith on the basis of direct dialogue with representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk, we see attempts to block the entire settlement process. Virtually every week there are statements from Ukrainian Government officials calling for a partial or complete revision of the Minsk Package of Measures. On 12 February, this core document, which was endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202, will celebrate its fifth anniversary. Not one of its paragraphs has been fully implemented to date. Against this background, the Ukrainian Government's attempts to blame everything on Russia and make it a "party to the conflict" are an integral part of its policy to delay the settlement and preserve a hotbed of tension in Donbas. All of this undermines the efforts of the Normandy format at the end of last year. Unfortunately, we see no reaction from our French and German partners to such actions by the Ukrainian Government.

The Paris summit of 9 December 2019 gave impetus to the negotiation process on a settlement and sent signals to the parties involved in the internal Ukrainian crisis about the need to accelerate the implementation of the Minsk agreements. It was emphasized in particular that this would require the work of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) to be intensified. The TCG provides a unique opportunity for direct dialogue between the representatives of the Ukrainian Government, Donetsk and Luhansk. However, the parties have so far failed to develop this momentum.

The large-scale exchange of detainees between the Ukrainian Government and Donbas on 29 December 2019 was an important humanitarian step. It was also intended to serve as a significant measure to restore confidence. However, according to data reported in the media by representatives of

certain areas of Donbas, there are already difficulties with the documents of persons released by the Ukrainian Government. More than half of them are still subject to an arrest warrant as persons under investigation – the promise of the Ukrainian authorities to arrange proper legal clearance has not been completely fulfilled. In the absence of a law on amnesty for those involved in the events in Donbas, which the Ukrainian Government committed itself to adopting under the Minsk agreements, this complicates the work on the preparation of an exchange of detainees according to the principle of “all for all”.

Referring to its desire to revise the Package of Measures, and contrary to the decisions of the Normandy format summits, the Ukrainian Government continues to disregard the political part of its commitments (paragraphs 4, 5, 9, 11 and 12 of the Package of Measures). There is no substantive dialogue with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk on the agreement of the legal aspects of the special status of Donbas. No constitutional amendments have been made to reflect this status. The “status law” itself is not permanent. The “Steinmeier formula” agreed in the TCG on the procedure for the enactment of the aforementioned law has not been enshrined in Ukrainian legislation. The Ukrainian Government is still also avoiding discussions with Donbas on local elections. Instead, it deliberately overemphasizes issues related to the final stage of the settlement, for example questions about the border.

However, it is important not to forget that a comprehensive political settlement provides the framework for a viable solution to the crisis and is a necessary condition for this solution. I would be interested to hear Ms. Grau’s opinion on the reasons for the political stalemate. What specific steps should be taken, in conjunction with Mr. Pierre Morel, co-ordinator of the relevant working group, to revitalize the discussions on a political settlement?

Exchanges of fire continue in Donbas in violation of paragraph 1 of the Package of Measures. Following a decline during the New Year’s holidays, the number of ceasefire violations has returned to the previous levels. Fresh destruction of civilian facilities as a result of shelling has been recorded in Donbas. Recent damage has been reported in the Petrovskiy district of Donetsk and in the settlement of Berezivske in the Luhansk region. People continue to suffer. We expect the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) to prepare a thematic report on the casualties and destruction. A similar report was released more than two years ago, and this practice needs to be resumed. The publication of consolidated information will have an important deterrent effect and would represent a direct contribution by the SMM towards alleviating the situation of the civilian population.

The Ukrainian Government’s military procurements from abroad are increasing. Against this background, the Ukrainian officials state their readiness to liberate Donbas by means of force, along with their unwillingness to discuss the disengagement of forces and hardware along the entire line of contact. In this regard, the lack of momentum in carrying out the instruction of the Normandy format summit in Paris regarding the agreement of three additional disengagement areas by the end of March is not surprising. There is no doubt as to the need for rapid disengagement: we remember how last year a functioning school in Zolote-5/Mykhailivka came under fire from Ukrainian armed forces’ positions on more than a dozen occasions. According to SMM data, these attacks stopped once the Ukrainian military withdrew from the disengagement area.

We need to find ways of reducing the suffering of the civilian population. The socio-economic and transport blockade of Donbas continues. The Ukrainian Government should fulfil its commitments under the Package of Measures (paragraph 8) to restore socio-economic ties and pay pensions and social benefits. We trust that Ms. Grau will be able to turn the situation around in the TCG and guide the parties towards successful dialogue on all practical aspects.

Mr. Çevik,

The SMM's monitoring of military activity on both sides of the line of contact should be balanced and without distortions. Much of this depends on you. The SMM should operate objectively, transparently and impartially. As can be seen from the Mission's reports, the territory of certain areas of Donbas is subject to very close monitoring. At the same time, more attention needs to be paid to areas behind Ukrainian armed forces' lines, notably with the aid of technical monitoring equipment, which is necessary in the context of early warning of a possible military escalation. It is important to intensify monitoring of the railway hubs used by the Ukrainian military to move weapons (Kostiantynivka, Khlibodarivka, Rubizhne and others) and their weapons storage sites. Not so long ago, in the Luhansk region, the Mission spotted two unused storage sites for weapons belonging to the Ukrainian armed forces – there was no equipment at these sites. At the same time, a lot of territory controlled by the Ukrainian military is off limits to the SMM under the pretext of the danger posed by mines. It looks like the Ukrainian Government has something to hide there. The Ukrainian Government's attempts to use unmanned aerial vehicles for military purposes, which violates the Minsk agreements, also need to be monitored.

The armed confrontation in Donbas is part of the broader context of the internal Ukrainian crisis that enveloped the country six years ago. It is important that the SMM is able to use all the opportunities of its mandate of 21 March 2014, including monitoring the situation in the rest of Ukraine. In your report, Mr. Çevik, you mentioned the human rights aspects that the SMM is focusing on. Closer attention needs to be paid to these issues. The Mission's resources should be directed towards increased monitoring of respect for the rights of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine and national minorities, the situation surrounding the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the suppression of freedom of speech, and attempts to establish media censorship. Problems in these areas have been confirmed repeatedly by a number of international institutions, including the OSCE, and also by non-governmental organizations. It is important to respond to the signals coming from civil society regarding the Ukrainian Government's violations of its obligations and the deterioration of the human rights situation in Ukraine in general. You can check, for example, the reports of Ukrainian and international NGOs published recently by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The current Ukrainian authorities came to power with slogans calling for national reconciliation and guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for all the inhabitants of the country. In fact, however, they have continued the discriminatory policy pursued by the previous leadership of Ukraine and intensified it in a number of areas. This is being done, as before, with an eye to the nationalists, who continue to dictate their terms to the authorities. The activities of the radicals frequently take place with the complicity of the law enforcement authorities. Vandalism under nationalist slogans and manifestations of neo-Nazism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism continue to be part of the Ukrainian domestic political reality. Information on this needs to be organized systematically in the form of a relevant thematic report by the SMM. This is within the Mission's mandate. When can we finally expect the reports we have mentioned?

Ambassador Grau,  
Ambassador Çevik,

We expect your efforts to be aimed at facilitating full implementation by the parties – the Ukrainian Government, Donetsk and Luhansk – of all the provisions of the Package of Measures in a co-ordinated manner, and also at preventing attempts to revise this road map to achieve peace in Ukraine.

In conclusion, we should like to wish you success in your difficult work, cool-headedness and good health.

Thank you for your attention.