



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement in response to the Address by the Chairperson-in-Office
of the OSCE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, H.E. Ms. Ann Linde**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna
to the 1298th special meeting of the Permanent Council
14 January 2021

Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, H.E. Ms. Ann Linde, and thanks her for presenting Sweden's priorities in the OSCE for 2021.

Ukraine fully supports these priorities. We believe they reflect the most pertinent issues on the agenda of the OSCE as the largest regional security organization. A focused attention to the core OSCE functions is particularly needed in the current time of the ongoing pandemic and scarce resources available at the disposal of participating States.

We look forward to your visit, Minister, to Ukraine next week. Defending European security order, one of your top three priorities, definitely starts with Ukraine, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of which was flagrantly violated seven years ago by the Russian Federation. The temporary occupation and attempted annexation of parts of Ukraine's territory remains the most severe challenge to the security architecture in Europe. The continuation of this armed conflict undermines any efforts to restore respect for the OSCE principles and commitments, a well-proven basis for peace and security in Europe.

The need to support the OSCE unique concept of comprehensive security, another top-priority of the Swedish Chairpersonship, is also fully shared by Ukraine. We are well aware of the price, which is paid when the OSCE commitments in its three dimensions are violated. Every week, in the meetings of the Permanent Council, we inform participating States on the ongoing abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms by aggressor State in Crimea and parts of Donbas. These areas were transformed into a territory of lawlessness, including forced imposition of Russian citizenship, violence, torture, persecutions, humiliation of human dignity and illegal detention of political prisoners.

We draw attention to the severe economic, social and environmental hardships, faced by Ukrainian citizens forced to live under Russia's temporary occupation. The number of IDPs in Ukraine, the number of those who directly suffered from the armed hostilities brought by the Russian aggression, and the number of Russian citizens illegally transferred to the occupied parts of Ukraine,

runs into the hundreds of thousands, exceeding the population of many European countries.

The scale and multifaceted character of these security challenges requires the full involvement of the OSCE and its structures under the guidance and leadership of the Swedish Chairpersonship. Among other issues, we ask to pay particular attention to the continued attempts of misuse of the human dimension events by Russia. We expect the Chairpersonship as a guardian of the OSCE commitments to prevent participation of those affiliated to the Russian occupation administration in the temporarily occupied parts of Ukraine in such events.

Facilitating resolution of the conflicts in the OSCE area, announced by Sweden, is, for obvious reasons, warmly welcomed by Ukraine. We highly value the assistance provided by the OSCE and its participating States in this regard, most notably through the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Trilateral Contact Group.

The role of the SMM could hardly be overestimated. Strengthening its monitoring capacities, especially in the border areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions adjacent to the uncontrolled part of the border, remains an essential condition for reaching progress on the ground. We need to continue our pressure on Russia to ensure free and safe access of the monitors to all parts of Ukraine, temporarily occupied by it. The ongoing targeted actions aimed at restricting the Mission's freedom of movement are unacceptable. The issue of transparency along the uncontrolled segment of the Ukrainian-Russian state border is a part of wider topic of border security and management within the OSCE. We hope that it will remain high on the Organization's agenda this year.

We thank the Swedish Chairpersonship for re-appointment of Heidi Grau as the CiO Special Representative to Ukraine and the TCG. Her experience and diplomatic skills will be needed to bring the Russian side back to constructive consultations within the TCG. We have to finalize at last the long overdue arrangements on the next mutual release of detainees, full opening of the entry-exit checkpoints, demining and new disengagement areas, which were set by the leaders of States and Governments of the Normandie format.

Special attention in facilitating resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict must be paid to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, temporarily occupied by Russia. The ongoing accelerated militarization of the Crimean peninsula and its surrounding waters has in fact created a new security reality in the Black Sea and the wider Mediterranean region. The systematic persecutions of dissenting voices, mass media, civil activists and human rights defenders continue unabated. We call on the Swedish Chairpersonship not to limit its activities only to the existing Donbas-related mechanisms. Crimea is Ukraine. Crimea must be on the OSCE agenda, notwithstanding Russia's illegal stance on this issue.

We should pay proper attention to other conflicts in the OSCE area as well. Last year's developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone became just another reminder that both protracted and hot conflicts must be dealt within our Organization as a matter of priority. It is the common task for all participating States under the leadership of the Swedish Chairpersonship to revitalize the existing negotiating formats on the way to resolving these conflicts in line with

norms of international law and under the principle of respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity of independent states within their internationally recognized borders. As a state-guarantor and mediator in the Transdniestrian settlement process, Ukraine is ready to support respective efforts of the Swedish Chairpersonship in 2021, contributing to result-oriented negotiations in the “5+2” format.

Concluding my statement, I wish the Swedish Chairpersonship every success in implementing its Programme. You may count on Ukraine’s full support in this regard.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.