



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement**  
**in response to H.E. David Zalkaliani,**  
**President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**

As delivered by Delegation of Ukraine  
to the 1257<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
30 January 2020

**Mr. Chairman,**

Ukraine joins other delegations in warmly welcoming the President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, H.E. David Zalkaliani at the Permanent Council and thanks him for the address.

**Mr President,**

My country attaches great value to co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe in protecting and promoting the human rights and fundamental freedoms, which represent an essential pillar of security in Europe.

We also look forward that under Georgian Chairmanship the Committee of Ministers will further pursue efforts at strengthening the democratic security in Europe and adequately responding to current challenges.

For the two organisations, which place at their core the values of democracy and the rule of law, the biggest challenge stems from the Russian Federation, its pursuit of the policy of aggression and flagrant violation of the OSCE politically-binding commitments and the Council of Europe legally-binding obligations. The Russian Federation defies both. The most glaring violations of human rights take place in the territories affected by Russia's aggression and which remain under Russia's illegal occupation.

In the temporarily occupied Crimea since 2014, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars face systematic violations of their rights; journalists, Christian and Muslim religious minorities, human rights defenders and activists are persecuted and repressed. There are numerous cases of illegal detention, enforced disappearance, torture and killings by the Russian occupation authorities and their affiliates that remain without investigation.

Of particular concern for the OSCE and the Council of Europe from the human rights perspective must be the fate of the Ukrainian citizens, who had been thrown in jail by the Russian authorities on fabricated charges both in the Russia-occupied territories of Ukraine and in Russia.

**Mr President,**

On 9 October 1993, 32 Heads of State or Government of the member states of the Council of Europe, meeting here in Vienna, adopted a Declaration which confirmed the organization's pan-European vocation and referred to the issues of democracy,

democratic security, human rights, national minorities and the fight against all forms of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and intolerance.

The Declaration came as a reaction to the challenges facing Europe in the early 1990s.

From the very outset it reads, and I will quote: “The end of the division of Europe offers a historic opportunity to consolidate peace and stability on the continent. All our countries are committed to pluralist and parliamentary democracy, the indivisibility, and universality of human rights, the rule of law and a common cultural heritage enriched by its diversity. Europe can thus become a vast area of democratic security.”

The 32 European leaders went on, firstly, to declare that “This Europe is a source of immense hope which must in no event be destroyed by territorial ambitions” and secondly, to condemn all such aberrations.

The Vienna Declaration was signed by the European leaders in response to the war in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. However, the Declaration is still in force, as are those of the international norms on which it was based.

Unfortunately, 26 years after we see again, that territorial ambitions, the resurgence of aggressive nationalism, and the attempts to perpetuate spheres of influence are thriving on the European continent.

The Council of Europe has been established after the Second World War with the ultimate goal to prevent the repetition of such a tragedy in the future.

And now this very Council of Europe is struggling to remain consistent, not to give up on its own principles or convictions, and not be the hostage of geopolitical considerations.

What is your vision as President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the possible ways to revive the Organization and to prevent its further erosion?

One of possible ways to rebuild Council of Europe’s integrity and make it again a strong and unbiased defender of human rights, democracy and the rule of law on the whole continent is to ensure implementation of its legal standards that applies equally to all Council of Europe member states. Not to provide concessions to some member states and not to put a blind eye on their violations of international law and statutory obligations.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We again thank President Zalkaliani for his presentation and assure him of Ukraine’s support of the efforts to strengthening democratic security in Europe.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**