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**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 796-th FSC Plenary Meeting**
(16 September 2015 at 10.00, Hofburg)
(Agenda item 2)

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the number of ceasefire violations has dropped over the recent weeks the sustainable de-escalation is not yet the case. The pro-Russian militants continue their provocative shellings and attacks on the Ukrainian positions and the residential areas of Donbas, resulting in new casualties among the Ukrainian servicemen and the civilian population. Over the past week the OSCE SMM registered firings on the Ukrainian positions with small arms, grenade launchers and mortars near the settlements of Muratove, Novotoshivka and Krymske. The sabotage and reconnaissance groups of militants have stepped up their work in several areas along the contact line, especially near the settlements of Avdiivka and Stanytsya Luhanska, between the settlements of Popasna and Schastya, Volnovakha and Tel'manove.

We observe no signs that supply of Russian weapons and mercenaries into Donbas are halted. Quite the contrary, there are numerous evidences, including those from the OSCE monitors, of the Russian modern hardware present in Donbas. According to the SMM report of 11 September the aerial surveillance imagery revealed a significant concentration of military equipment in the area of "LPR"-controlled Alchevsk (39km south-west of Luhansk) in violation of the respective withdrawal lines. Six heavy artillery systems, seven (towed) battlefield guns, three main battle tanks (MBT), 43 armoured vehicles, 80 military-type trucks, and 29 pieces of unidentified military equipment were spotted.

This casts serious doubts on the readiness of the Russian Federation to implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements. We must ensure that Russia and the militants it backs do not resume their attacks across the line of contact, as it happened many times before, when the violence had decreased.

We must seize the momentum generated by the ceasefire to implement Minsk fully. To this end, an agreement on the withdrawal of tanks and artillery under 100 mm, to be verified by the SMM, should be signed without further delay in order to solve this outstanding issue.

Mr. Chairman,

We underline the need for an effective verification regime which would allow the SMM to independently verify the withdrawal of heavy weapons as well as tanks and artillery under 100 mm from the respective exclusion zones. It is necessary to establish permanent 24/7 monitoring posts on the contact line and seek SMM access to all parts of the territory controlled by the militants, including at the state border with Russia. It is unacceptable and contrary to the agreements that until now the SMM has restricted access to large parts of the territory under militants' control. It is also necessary, in our view, to speedily strengthen the technical monitoring capabilities of the SMM, including by UAVs.

We welcome the most recent meetings and contacts within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE Chairmanship and its working subgroups. We reiterate our support for the efforts of the Normandy format in facilitating the full implementation of the Minsk agreements with full respect for OSCE principles and commitments. We also reiterate our strong support to the work of the Trilateral Contact Group, which must continue to play an essential role in the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Mr. Chairman,

The relative calm in recent days constitutes progress towards a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire and we urge the Russian Federation and the militants it supports to consolidate it. The establishment of relative cease-fire in Donbas is also of crucial importance for placing the process of de-escalation on a sustainable basis. Every effort must be made to ensure good-faith implementation by the Russian Federation and the militants it supports of all provisions of the Minsk agreements, starting from the withdrawal of heavy weapons, mercenaries and the Russian regular armed forces from the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, exchange of prisoners, resuming the Ukraine's control of the Ukrainian-Russian state border under the OSCE monitoring.

Unfortunately, the on-going unwillingness of the Russian Federation and the illegal armed groups it supports to abide by the commitments, undertaken in Minsk, continues to undermine the efforts for peace. We repeatedly requested the Russian delegation at this Forum to explain the proven facts of placing their newest weapons in the conflict zone, such as battle tanks, artillery systems, air surveillance and reconnaissance equipment, jamming communication stations etc.

In particular, at the FSC-791st Meeting we stated that Russia continues to violate the Ukrainian airspace for conducting surveillance and reconnaissance of the Ukrainian positions by their military drones. One of such reconnaissance UAV was shot down near the settlement of Pisky and fell north to the village of Vodyane. The downed UAV "Forpost", produced for the Russian Armed Forces, was built in 2013 at the Ural plant of civil aviation in the Russian Federation.

Also in addition to the numerous evidences of Russian weapons in Donbas, that has been earlier provided by our delegation, notable is the SMM report of 30 August, registering a mobile jamming station R-330ZH "Zhytel" near Telmanove. Incidentally, the mentioned report was followed the next day by the loss of the OSCE UAV over the same area to the northeast of Mariupol where "Zhytel" station was spotted. We condemn the impediments by the militants to the SMM patrol to access the area and undertake a search. It is clear that the Russian Federation, which deployed these modern jamming systems and anti-aircraft weapons in Donbas, bears responsibility for the incidents with the SMM UAVs aimed at concealing the troops and armaments concentration in the occupied territories of Donbas.

Mr. Chairman,

We express deep concern that Russia continues to undertake steps that destabilize the security situation around Ukraine and in Europe. Since early spring of 2014 the Russian army has conducted a number of surprise inspections on combat readiness of military units and districts and large-scale military exercises in the vicinity

of the Russian-Ukrainian state border. According to the recent notification of the Russian side in the period 14-20 September 2015 the strategic command-staff exercise "Center-2015" is taking place at its final stage of operational and combat training of the Russian Armed Forces and Armies of the Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. During this training, participants will assess the readiness of the armed forces to localize an international armed conflict. About 95 thousand troops, more than 7 thousand pieces of weapons and military equipment, 170 aircrafts and 20 warships will be involved in these military exercises.

At the last FSC meeting we informed the Forum that 53 tactical groups of the Russian armed forces - 39 battalions and 14 company tactical groups with a total of 50.5 thousand officers and soldiers - have been concentrated on the Russian territory near the Russian-Ukrainian state border.

Ukraine's last years' experience clearly demonstrates that such concentration of the Russian troops and military hardware near the borders with a neighbouring state and military exercises of such unprecedented scale conducted by the Russian Federation can precede a Russian military aggression, subsequent violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of a neighbouring state, illegal occupation and annexation of part of another country.

It is also important to note that since the very beginning of the crisis in and around Ukraine my country has consistently demonstrated openness and transparency. In total, 33 verification activities were conducted in Ukraine by 26 OSCE participating States. Furthermore, Ukraine voluntarily hosted 16 out of quota inspections (13 in 2014 and 3 in 2015) under chapter X "Regional measures" of the VD.

In this respect, we call on the Russian Federation to demonstrate a good will and to conduct on its territory relevant verification events under the Vienna Document. Such events would prove that Russia is an open and transparent partner.

Mr. Chairman,

We would also like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention last response of the Russian Federation (format F41) to the US request (format F101) and the Ukrainian positive response (format F102) under the Vienna Document.

The US in its notification CBM/US/15/0018/F101/O proposed Ukraine that the United States and specified OSCE participating States conduct a chapter X Vienna Document inspection on the territory of Ukraine. The US proposed to adapt and apply provisions of chapter IX of the VD relating to the proposed inspection event. The purpose of the inspection was to address regional security needs identified by Ukraine in consultation with the US and other OSCE participating States and to seek to provide clarity related to the regional security situation. The proposed inspection was intended to increase transparency into events on the ground in Ukraine.

The duration of the proposed inspection was to be 10 days with the team of 7 inspectors from 4 participating States: USA (lead nation), Denmark, Poland, and Georgia. The location of the specified area defined by geographical coordinates along the Ukrainian coast including the Crimean peninsula. Start of the specified area inspection in Ukraine was planned on 14 September.

The Russian Federation in its reply (notification CBM/RU/15/0097/F41/O) stated that the territory of the Republic of Crimea which was planned for the inspection is the territory of the Russian Federation and the requested inspection on this territory is not possible.

In this connection, we wish to emphasize that the Autonomous Republic of Crimea remains an integral part of Ukraine and the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders is safeguarded by international law and UN General Assembly resolution 68/262 of 27 March 2014, "Territorial integrity of Ukraine". Therefore, the provisions of the Vienna Document apply to the entire territory of Ukraine as an OSCE participating State.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude by reiterating our call on the Russian Federation to immediately take all necessary practical steps towards de-escalation in Donbas, stipulated by the Minsk agreements, and honour its commitments in good faith and in full respect of Ukraine's territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty.

We urge Russia to restore its respect for the norms of international law and the OSCE principles and commitments, to halt its aggression against Ukraine, including by withdrawing its troops, mercenaries and weaponry from the territory of Ukraine, and reverse the illegal occupation and annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.