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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1161st MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 October 2017

**On the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement  
the Minsk agreements**

Mr. Chairperson,

The Ukrainian authorities continue to make the prospect of a settlement of the internal Ukrainian conflict less likely by sabotaging the Minsk agreements. This is graphically illustrated by the amendments to the draft law on the particulars of the State policy for ensuring State sovereignty over the occupied territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The reference (in paragraph 7) to the priority of the implementation of the Minsk agreements has been removed from the draft law. Such a blatantly militaristic document will not lead to peace. Attempts to legalize the crimes of the punitive battalions of the so-called anti-terrorist operation are futile. The only path to reconciliation and amnesty for those involved in the events in Donbas is set out in the Minsk Package of Measures.

The new Ukrainian Law on Education is a major impediment to the teaching of national minorities' mother tongues. This is the title of a Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly resolution. The vapid text of the resolution does not reflect the full danger of attempts to use language in a power struggle. The "Maidan authorities" started with this in 2014, which resulted in a dramatic escalation of the crisis.

A minimum quota of 75 per cent of television broadcasting in the Ukrainian language has been introduced.

The local authorities have embraced this discriminatory frenzy. On 5 October, Kyiv City Council banned the use of the Russian language in businesses and in the office work and records management of self-government bodies, municipal institutions and services, and also in advertisements, on signs and posters, on price tags in shops and menus in restaurants.

The aforementioned laws contravene Ukraine's Constitution and international commitments. We demand a clear assessment on part of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and urge

them to exert pressure on the Ukrainian Government to protect millions of the country's citizens from discrimination and violation of their rights.

In the absence of a response from the Western countries, the radicalization of society, especially young people, continues in Ukraine. Ideas of radical nationalism and extremism are spreading. The so-called Heroes' March of Glory took place in Kyiv, timed to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. According to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), 20,000 people marched in the streets of Kyiv under the flags of radicals and nationalists from the National Corps, Right Sector and Wotan Jugend. Combating the radicalization of young people is meant to be one of the priorities of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship. We are waiting for a response.

The disturbances in Kyiv involving Mikheil Saakashvili are evidence of the latest exacerbation of the political troubles, which have already led to an escalation of tension in Donbas on a number of occasions.

The latest upsurge in violations of the ceasefire regime on the part of the Ukrainian armed forces occurred on 17 October on the eve of the meeting of the Minsk Contact Group. The militia-controlled residential areas of Yasne, Trudivski, Oktiabr and Kalynove were subjected to massive shelling from Ukrainian armed forces' positions using large-calibre mortars. Within a period of just 24 hours, 388 units of ammunition for weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements were used. This is the greatest volume since the start of the back-to-school truce. Two civilians were injured as a result of shelling on 17 October. Earlier, one civilian was injured in Zaitseve (8 October) and two apartment buildings were damaged in Dokuchaievsk (10 October).

The security forces are preparing for new hostilities. From 9 to 16 October, OSCE monitors identified new weapons belonging to the Ukrainian armed forces in violation of the withdrawal lines: 20 howitzers in Oleksandropil, six anti-tank guns in Zhelanne, three howitzers in Zelene Pole and three howitzers in Hranitne. Last week, the monitors were unable to account for around 200 units of military equipment belonging to the Ukrainian armed forces in their depots.

The Ukrainian Government continues to derail the disengagement of forces in Stanytsia Luhanska. On 9 October, the Ukrainian armed forces once again failed to respond to a signal from the militia to start the withdrawal.

It cannot be ruled out that the Ukrainian security forces are preparing fresh provocations similar to the explosion involving an SMM patrol vehicle in the Luhansk region in April. The threat of mines remains a significant obstacle to the freedom of movement of the monitors in government-controlled territories.

We draw attention to the extent to which the Ukrainian Government has restricted the work of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) and its Russian component. Members of the JCCC are not permitted to use personal protective equipment (unlike the SMM), and the movement of officers, who are meant to be monitoring the observance of the ceasefire regime, is being obstructed. The head of the Russian JCCC unit was not granted permission to travel, as planned, with Principal Deputy Chief Monitor Alexander Hug under the pretext of the "absence of security guarantees". He was also not allowed to enter the territory of certain areas of Donbas. The absurdity of such a pretext is obvious, since

guarantees were provided for the SMM staff. It is clear that the Ukrainian Government is torpedoing the work of the JCCC, which has demonstrated its effectiveness in helping to establish local truces at the line of contact to enable repairs to be carried out at critical civilian infrastructure facilities. Such actions on the part of the Ukrainian Government could lead to a suspension of the JCCC's work.

Furthermore, the Ukrainian armed forces have shelled JCCC observation teams six times since August and on three occasions in October. On 18 October, a Russian officer together with an OSCE SMM patrol came under fire from the Ukrainian armed forces at the Donetsk filtration plant. Mortar shells exploded 300 and 600 metres away from the monitors. The JCCC representative was there to help the SMM service a surveillance camera.

In conclusion, the destructive position of the Ukrainian Government was once again confirmed at the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group on 18 October in Minsk. The half-hearted decision to extend for one year the inoperative law on the special status of Donbas does not remove the problems as regards the sabotage of direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk on all aspects of a political settlement.