

Opening Statement
by H.E. Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya, Deputy Minister
for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Head of the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 2019 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(Warsaw, 16 September 2019)

Mrs. Chairperson,
Minister Czaputowicz,
Minister Lajčák,
President Tsereteli,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We thank the ODIHR, the Polish hosts and the Slovak Chairmanship for organizing this important annual human dimension meeting, as well as for the warm hospitality we all enjoy.

From the very outset I would like to align with the statement of Minister Jacek Czaputowicz and, in particular, on the issue of the Russian military aggression against my country.

Mrs. Chairperson,

Human dimension stays at the core of comprehensive security in the OSCE region. ODIHR, for its part, remains a guardian of the implementation of commitments and internationally recognized election observation standard-setting institution.

We express sincere gratitude to Director Gísladóttir, Ambassadors Tejler and Jónsson for leading the largest international election observation missions and their professional work in organizing an independent monitoring of the 2019 regular presidential and early parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

Their findings reflect a strong commitment of Ukraine to democracy and human rights through the conduct of free and fair elections in line with the national legislation, OSCE commitments and other international standards. Constructive criticism is taken on board.

Distinguished participants,

Protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is a priority both of our foreign policy and of internal reform processes. We will continue pragmatic work in this direction, thoroughly implementing international legal norms and standards.

The new Government of Ukraine is resolute to pursue focused efforts to achieve tangible progress in European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Distinguished delegates,

Today's Europe is saturated with various human rights events, taking place in Geneva, Strasbourg, Vienna, Warsaw or elsewhere. Unfortunately, some of these actions have no or too little traction with the realities on the ground.

War in the heart of Europe, attempted annexation of a country's territory, illegal elections in the occupied territories of Georgia and Ukraine, crisis of migrants and IDPs – has the

reaction of the OSCE or any other European human rights bodies, if any, helped the people, whose human rights and fundamental freedoms had been violated?

Instead of jointly developing specific solutions to real problems, often we spend our precious time fighting with GONGOs, who clutter important discussions with genuine civil society and human rights defenders and penetrate various institutions like malware that destroys computers.

Real traction would be gained if 57 OSCE participating states, of which 47 are members of the Council of Europe and all of them are member states of the United Nations, implemented fully their legal obligations under international human right instruments and applied international legal standards of human rights protection.

It is unacceptable, when we face situations of brutal human rights violations, that political considerations take over, threatening the rule- and standard- based European order. It comes to the point of absurdity, that when we have to address serious human rights abuses, there appears to be “a red line” about “the absence of consensus on the status of a territory”, as if the Helsinki Final Act and international law ceased to exist.

We greatly appreciate the work of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, which, despite permanent denials of access to the occupied Crimea on the part of the occupying Power, continue to provide regular reporting on the deteriorating human rights situation in the occupied Crimea and on the non-compliance of the Russian Federation with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.

Distinguished delegates,

Next year will bring us to the appointment of a new OSCE Secretary General and new heads of OSCE institutions. The OSCE possesses unique practical instruments to protect human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms. All of them, including tools of quiet diplomacy, were created to bring vocal results and not to keep silence. We should encourage a pragmatic, politically neutral and result-oriented implementation of their mandates.

Mrs. Chairperson,

As we prepare for a two-week marathon of discussion of implementation of our political commitments, I shall reduce my remarks and conclude by reminding all of us:

- that human rights should not become victims of political considerations, but they should be subject to meticulous implementation of undertaken legal obligations;
- and that there are still people in our continent, for whom fighting for their fundamental human rights and fundamental freedoms is a daily struggle for survival.

We cannot afford to let them down, we cannot afford all action and no traction.

The full text as prepared will be posted online.

I thank you, Mrs. Chairperson.