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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1054th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 May 2015

**In response to the statement by Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini,  
Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine  
and in the Trilateral Contact Group**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Ambassador Tagliavini,

Thank you for your detailed report on the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and the meetings of the specialist subgroups. We attach great importance to this mechanism, and we see no alternative to the full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures in good faith. Russia believes that a Ukrainian settlement can be ensured solely by peaceful, political means and through direct dialogue between the parties. This is the most important element of broad inclusive internal Ukrainian dialogue, which is necessary to carry out constitutional reforms in Ukraine.

The results of the meetings held inspire cautious optimism. The main thing for us is that the parties have managed to embark upon direct negotiations to implement the Minsk Package of Measures. We are, however, still at the very beginning of this journey and there is a great deal of work ahead of us. The key to success here is that Kyiv's direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk should be as substantive as possible and focused on de-escalating tension and rigorously transforming all the measures provided for in Minsk into facts on the ground.

We note the particular responsibility that rests with the group co-ordinators from the OSCE. We expect a responsible and balanced approach from them. Under no circumstances should the co-ordinators put pressure on the parties or impose their views on them. The co-ordinators' task is to help find solutions, and nothing more.

It is crucial that all parties refrain from unilateral steps, which would undermine or distort the essence of the Minsk agreements. The European Union and the United States of America must not shirk their responsibilities in this regard. We might recall that a United Nations Security Council resolution was adopted in support of the Minsk Package of Measures, which requires all States to respect this Package.

Ensuring a complete ceasefire and the complete withdrawal of all the types of heavy weapons covered by the Package of Measures remains the primary task. We advocate the swift conclusion of additional agreements to separate the parties in Shyrokyne, which could also be applied to other hotspots, and also to withdraw weapons with a calibre up to 100 mm and all types of tanks.

Unfortunately, we are compelled to note that the situation along the demarcation line remains tense and extremely fragile. Periods of some degree of stability alternate with intensified shelling. Some forces are trying to exacerbate the situation through provocations and to torpedo attempts to increase the level of trust between the parties. In this regard, we believe it necessary for the Ukrainian command to finally bring all the paramilitary formations operating on its side of the demarcation line completely under its control.

It would be a huge mistake to leave them any opportunity for independent action now. Provocative action, including sabotage, is likely to affect the willingness on the part of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic to continue to show restraint. We strongly urge them to show this restraint. However, irresponsible actions by the "war party" may undermine the peace process. We hope that those in Kyiv who are truly committed to a peaceful resolution of the crisis and to full implementation of the Minsk agreements understand this.

Such actions are especially counter-productive at a time when the first steps are being taken in the dialogue on the political aspects of a settlement. We recall that, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Package of Measures, modalities for the holding of local elections in Donbas should be agreed on between Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk. We note that the consultations in the subgroup on political questions proceeded in a businesslike fashion. Concrete proposals were presented by Donetsk and Luhansk on modalities for the holding of local elections. They should be carefully examined by Kyiv's representatives. We trust that they will take a businesslike approach, focused on achieving a mutually acceptable result.

We emphasize that it is unrealistic to expect elections to be held properly without the Verkhovna Rada adopting a normal law on amnesty.

We have taken note of the conditions identified as necessary by the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) for it to ensure election monitoring. The quicker the parties agree on all the modalities required, the sooner the ODIHR experts can begin planning their observation mission, on the ground and elsewhere. Until then, it would be advisable to refrain from any steps that could be interpreted in Donbas as external pressure.

We should also like to draw attention to the fact that it is counter-productive to drag out the consultations on constitutional reform. Parallel unilateral action that does not take account of the key provisions of the Package of Measures will only drive the parties further apart. Forcing Donbas out of Ukraine's legal framework is in no way conducive to preserving the country's territorial integrity.

This also applies in full measure to the socio-economic sphere. The continuing blockade of Donbas has already effectively cut its inhabitants off from social benefits, made access to food and medicines more difficult, and destroyed commercial and economic ties.

Resolution No. 595 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (on the payment of benefits only upon the return of territories to Kyiv's control) and Resolution No. 466 of the National Bank (on prohibiting financial transactions in territories not under the control of the Ukrainian authorities) should be repealed immediately. These documents effectively legalize the refusal to recognize Kyiv's sovereignty over these territories and the inhabitants of Donbas as its citizens. We expect concrete decisive steps from our German and French partners, who promised in Minsk to assist in restoring banking operations in Donbas.

The exchange of prisoners and detainees, along with urgent humanitarian aid to Donbas, remain important items on the agenda. We consider that the parties should make greater efforts to achieve the result required by the Package of Measures.

Ms. Tagliavini,

We understand how great a burden of responsibility rests on your shoulders. You deal with it admirably, acting with the utmost honesty and professionalism in the interests of achieving peace. We are deeply grateful to you for this. We sincerely wish you every success and the best of luck in all of your undertakings.

Thank you for your attention.