



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

## **Statement in response to the Address by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland Zbigniew RAU**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1350<sup>th</sup> special meeting of the Permanent Council  
13 January 2022

### **Mr Chairperson,**

The delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, H.E. Mr. Zbigniew Rau.

We thank him for comprehensive presenting Poland's priorities in the OSCE for 2022 and wish the Minister every success in steering the work of the OSCE in the course of the year.

Poland is entering the Chairpersonship's office in times when the Russian Federation has intensified its efforts in questioning the fundamental OSCE principles, including the inviolability of borders and the sovereign right of each and every participating State to freely choose its future and security arrangements. These are the principles that the Russian Federation has committed to respect faithfully.

A contemporary history of Europe proves that people's aspirations to live in the community of free nations pose no risk to the Russian Federation. Rather opposite, this could be beneficial for Russia itself, should the Kremlin finally respect this right.

However, a manipulative and distorted narrative, which Moscow promotes for the interpretation of the indivisibility of the OSCE comprehensive security, is only drifting us away from rebuilding trust and confidence in the region. Even more, it is used as a pretext for the states to be invaded, subjugated or coerced by the Russian Federation. I would remind the Russian side of its commitment undertaken in the Istanbul Charter for European Security that each participating State has an equal right to security and is free to choose or change its security arrangements, including treaties of alliance. Russia cannot claim that its right to security cancels the same rights of other participating States.

The fact that Russia encircled itself with a belt of conflicts contains a reply in itself what is the key problem to be addressed and solved in terms of ensuring the comprehensive security.

In the meantime, the Russian Federation is trying to persuade us that there are no plans to invade Ukraine. However, the facts speak for themselves.

Russia's pseudo-historical narratives, disinformation campaigns and an approach 'take it or leave it' raise further concerns about its true intentions.

Russia has already invaded Ukraine back in 2014 when our country had a status of a non-block state by law. It has not prevented Russia from aggression and temporary occupation of Crimea and parts of Donbas. So why should anyone expect that such a status would stop Russia from another unprovoked attack?

Is there any other explanation for 54 battalion tactical groups that have been deployed in close proximity to the Ukrainian territory? In numbers, it means more than 106 000 regular and well-trained troops, 1500 tanks, 3600 armored combat vehicles, 1900 artillery, while Russia is capable to bring even more in a very short period of time, from one to two weeks. Furthermore, just before our meeting Russia decided to conduct another military exercise with the participation about 3000 servicemen on our borders. Let me also remind you that since 22 December 2021, when strong determination to fully adhere to the Measures to Strengthen the Ceasefire agreement (of 22 July 2020) was reconfirmed at the TCG meeting, we have had 5 our servicemen killed on the line of contact in Donbas.

In view of all this, repeated rebuttals on Russia's behalf are not enough. Real actions are needed that would result in their verified withdrawal.

With regular amassing Russian troops on the border with Ukraine and orchestrated controlled escalation in the occupied parts of Donbas we have been witnessing in the course of the last year, the Russian leadership proves once again Moscow's voluntarism to point the gun at our common European security at any moment they want.

It is a lesson to be learnt by all of us. As long as Ukraine remains still at the doorstep of the common European home, Moscow will continue shattering the foundations of our common security with the aim to turn the clock backwards and restore its zone of influence under the Cold War.

**Mr Chairperson,**

In view of such challenging circumstances, we commend personal determination of Minister Rau to support and facilitate debate how the concept of the indivisibility of security can be further elaborated.

We are convinced that this process must take place in full conformity and on the basis of the OSCE fundamental principles, but not through revising them. The Helsinki Decalogue contains all needed guarantees for prosperous and peaceful Europe.

We also believe that if the process focuses on the transparency of military activities and confidence building measures, this would fit the OSCE expertise the best and could contribute significantly to improving the existing situation.

Non-military threats to security, including a growing number of cyber-attacks, should be also discussed at the table.

Talking about non-military threats let me quote what the Astana Commemorative Declaration says: "The inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of comprehensive security, we reiterate that human rights and fundamental freedoms are inalienable, and that their protection and promotion is our first responsibility", end of quote. An emblematic story of "Izoliatsiya" prison in the occupied city of Donetsk and systematic persecution of residents of the occupied Crimea are a stark reminder of the worst Soviet practices that should have never been repeated again.

Apart from that, facilitating resolution of the conflicts in the OSCE area, announced by Poland, is, for obvious reasons, warmly welcomed by Ukraine.

Ending of the Russian armed aggression and occupation of Crimea and parts of Donbas as well as other places in Europe will be the best security guarantees in Europe. Russia must withdraw its forces from the territory of Ukraine and stop interfering in our internal affairs.

On its part, Ukraine is fully committed to the peaceful resolution of the Russian-Ukraine conflict. As President Zelenskyy recently said and I quote: "It is time to agree in a substantive manner on ending the conflict, and we are ready for the necessary decisions during the new summit of the leaders of the four countries", end of quote.

In this regard, we welcome the latest efforts of the leaders of Germany and France aimed to reinvigorate the N4 format. We also highly value the assistance provided by the OSCE and its participating States in this regard, most notably through the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Trilateral Contact Group.

Today the SMM role is even more important than ever before. Trying to conceal the Russian military presence in the region, Moscow keeps imposing new restrictions on the Mission's freedom of movement. SMM itself considers current level of limitations as such that undermines the sustainability of its presence in this area. This situation is unacceptable. Due attention in this regard should be paid to ensuring the SMM's ability to fully implement its mandate, including as regards unhindered access to Crimea, as well as further strengthening of its monitoring capacities, especially in the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions near the border with the Russian Federation.

We also fully support human-oriented approach of Poland's Chairpersonship. It is true that the civilians are the most affected by conflicts. That said, the finalization of pending issues related to demining, release of detainees or opening EECs in Schastia and Zolote could significantly improve the life of people in certain areas in Donbas and should be among our priorities in the coming months.

Special attention in facilitating resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict must be paid to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, temporarily occupied by Russia. We call-on the Polish Chairpersonship-in-Office to keep Crimea high on the OSCE agenda. We furthermore invite the OSCE institutions and executive structures, including SMM, HCNM, ODIHR, and RFoM to conduct the remote monitoring situation in Crimea in particular with the view on continuously deteriorating situation with human rights on the peninsula.

Almost 140 Ukrainian citizens are currently deprived of liberty on political grounds in Crimea or in Russia itself. Free media are forced out from the peninsula and journalists, including citizen ones, are being threatened or detained.

We also remain seriously concerned of the illegal seizure of the former nuclear weapons storage sites, efforts to extend jurisdiction over the nuclear facilities and material by the Russian Federation in Crimea, and deployment of nuclear-capable weapons system to the peninsula.

Minister Rau, Ukraine welcomes the Polish Chairpersonship's focus on contributing to finding peaceful solutions to regional and protracted conflicts. We believe, that the OSCE remains well-equipped for making better use of the existing negotiating formats in order to find solutions to these conflicts in line with the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of independent states within their internationally recognized borders.

Ukraine also shares Chair's view that this is the proper time to discuss possible ways of post-pandemic economic recovery. At the same time, Russia's continued attempts to weaponize the energy supplies could be detrimental to our common efforts and should be seriously taken into account.

Concluding my statement, I wish the Polish Chairpersonship every success in implementing its Programme. You may count on Ukraine's full support for your initiatives across all OSCE three dimensions aimed at promoting our mutually agreed commitments across the continent.

Minister Rau, we are looking forward to welcoming you in Ukraine in your new capacity as the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office.

**I thank you.**