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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1026th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 November 2014

In response to the statement by Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to see Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini at today's Permanent Council meeting and thank her for her interesting and informative report.

We welcome the Swiss Chairmanship's assistance in the peaceful settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis within the framework of the Minsk process. This is a unique and irreplaceable format, since it is only here that both parties to the conflict are represented alongside Russia and the OSCE. It enables the central authorities and the representatives of south-eastern Ukraine to engage in direct dialogue and reach agreements on the most complex issues.

To date, the Minsk agreements are the only instruments to have the support of the Ukrainian parties themselves, the European Union (EU), the United States of America, Russia and other OSCE participating States. They provide for an entire set of essential short- and medium-term steps, including a ceasefire, security guarantees and political dialogue. We believe there is now a good basis for moving resolutely towards their implementation. We shall do everything possible in the interests of the systematic implementation of the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum.

In the current situation it is impossible to solve key issues without the representatives of all the parties to the conflict. History has taught us that it is impossible to solve conflict situations without direct contacts between the parties.

We recall that in the statement by the United States of America, the EU, Ukraine and Russia adopted in Geneva the Ukrainian authorities undertook to immediately establish a constitutional process with the participation of all the regions and political forces of the country. The word "immediately" was heard on 17 April, but eight months later this process is not even in the planning stage.

It is essential that in Kyiv's dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk account is taken of the elections held in Ukraine and in certain districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

We understand that the assessments of the elections differ. The Ukrainian media are quoting the Ukrainian Minister of the Interior, Arsen Avakov, on the election of deputies to the Verkhovna Rada. He talks about a "dirty, ugly situation with jiggery-pokery to achieve majorities and fighting among oligarchs", noting that over 400 cases of falsification during the elections had been filed.

The most important thing is that the political infighting to capitalize on the election results in Ukraine should not lead to a reinforcement of the belligerent rhetoric and the unleashing of calls to bury the Minsk agreements and move to solving the problem by force.

The elections of 2 November pose no threat to the Minsk agreements and the peace process. On the contrary, they provide an opportunity for establishing sustainable dialogue on the basis of mutual respect and equal rights within the Minsk format. We are willing to work constructively towards this together with our international partners.

We trust that the central authorities in Kyiv will also move towards a political rapprochement with the south-east. The law on the special status of certain districts in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions needs to be adopted; the law on amnesty needs to enter into force; and guarantees for the personal safety of participants in the Minsk consultations need to be provided.

We believe that the priority issue is to establish a genuine ceasefire that will be observed in a responsible manner by both parties. Unfortunately, this is not being implemented at the moment. Monitoring teams from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) have noted a large number of confirmed cases of the use of heavy weapons, including against militia-controlled towns and villages. The Ukrainian military are even firing on SMM vehicles.

As an important practical step towards putting a stop to the bloodshed, a clear line of separation should be established and the parties' heavy weaponry and armed units withdrawn to a safe distance, as stipulated in points 4 and 5 of the Minsk Memorandum, which would enable proper monitoring of the ceasefire by the SMM. This is the primary task on which the representatives of the parties on the ground are now working. Russia is making an active contribution to this, including as part of joint efforts with our Ukrainian colleagues in the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination.

Our Western partners talk a great deal about monitoring the Russian-Ukrainian border, referring to point 4 of the Minsk Protocol. Some are deliberately trying to distort the essence of this Protocol, calling for the immediate deployment of OSCE monitors to the Russian side of the border.

They are already there. Today, a decision on the extension of the mandate of monitors at the crossing points of Gukovo and Donetsk will be discussed. The invitation to the monitors and Ukrainian border guards was a goodwill gesture on the part of Russia and an additional confidence-building measure. However, we have the feeling that some of our colleagues are not very interested in preserving this.

The Russian-Ukrainian border is the subject of particularly close attention as it is and can easily be seen from space. It is reliably patrolled by the Border Service of the Russian Federation and is in no need of reinforcements.

Mr. Chairperson,

We believe that the next essential step following the cessation of combat activities should be work together to establish economic and political ties, as provided for in the Minsk Protocol, which speaks of the need for national and political dialogue between the parties. We believe that the OSCE, *inter alia* through the Trilateral Contact Group, can and should provide the most active assistance to the process of inclusive and nationwide dialogue. The long-term stabilization of the situation in Ukraine cannot be achieved without national concord, unity and reconciliation, constitutional reform and the decentralization of power.

In conclusion, allow me to express our deep gratitude to Heidi Tagliavini and to wish her continued success in her difficult mission.

Thank you for your attention.