



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

PC.DEL/627/17
11 May 2017

ENGLISH only

Statement on Europe Day and the 72nd anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe

As for delivery by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1145th meeting of the Permanent Council,
11 May 2017

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Ukraine aligned itself to the Statement delivered by the Delegation of the European Union on “Europe Day”. We are strongly and decisively committed to the vision of Europe whole, free and at peace.

This week, Ukraine marked the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation on 8 May and the Victory Day over Nazism in the Second World War on 9 May. It was 72 years ago that the Second World War came to an end in Europe epitomizing the heroic deeds and sacrifices of the allied forces, the Ukrainian nation among other nations of the former Soviet Union, who defeated the Nazism in the most horrible in its humanitarian cost armed conflict in the history of mankind. 29 of overall 76 military operations of the World War II, including the most fierce battles on the Soviet-German frontline, took place on the Ukrainian soil. Over 8 million of Ukrainians lost their life in this war. Virtually every family in Ukraine experienced this tragedy and suffered the loss of their nearest ones.

Marking both those days in Ukraine underlines the historical circumstances under which the Ukrainian nation met the end of the Second World War in Europe. We remember everyone who sacrificed life for the native land, family and home.

Distinguished colleagues,

The end of the Second World War brought peace and hope not only for the Ukrainian nation, but for tens and hundreds of the nations throughout the world. As enshrined in the UN Charter, elaborated with an active participation of Ukraine as a co-founder of the United Nations, there was a strong determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war through maintaining international peace and security in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. Many efforts have been undertaken to build a comprehensive and sustainable security order, which outlaws the use of force or threat of force in settling disputes.

The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 became a critical part of the European security architecture aimed at ensuring peace, respect for human rights, rule of law and

cooperation in Europe. The OSCE principles and commitments, including on inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in internal affairs and many others, remain at the core of peaceful co-existence and cooperation among nations.

Ukraine as a responsible international actor remains fully committed to the norms and principles established in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. We strongly believe that there must be no place for the use of force and attempts to change internationally recognized borders in the 21st century.

However, the lessons of the past have been dismissed by Ukraine's neighbour country, with whom we have been building friendly, constructive and mutually beneficial relations since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Ukraine signed with the Russian Federation the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership in 1997, the Treaty on the State Border in 2003, and many other bilateral and multilateral treaties, safeguarding respect for fundamental principles of international law. Russia co-signed the Budapest Memorandum granting security assurances to Ukraine in connection with its renunciation of the nuclear weapons.

Yet, it did not stop Russia from mounting an aggression against Ukraine. Three years ago the Russian Federation resorted to attempted annexation of part of my country's territory through military occupation of the Crimean Peninsula, the first such case in Europe since the end of the Second World War. After that Russia launched the hybrid warfare against Ukraine in Donbas. Presently, the grandchildren of those who were fighting against Nazism in the Second World War, are defending their native soil against the Russian aggression. Tens of thousands of Ukrainians were killed and wounded, over 1,7 million were forced to flee their homes. The Ukrainians have once again found themselves on the frontlines of the fight against aggressor attempting to undermine freedom, democracy and rule of law.

Recalling the tragedy of the biggest armed conflict in the world, which ended 72 years ago, we underscore the imperative of doing the utmost to uphold the OSCE common values and principles, to protect the peace and security in Europe, to stop the ongoing flagrant breach of international law. Remembering the past, this is what we owe to the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.