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Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Europe Day and the 74th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1227th meeting of the Permanent Council,
9 May 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

The origin of the European integration, shared values and principles rest on the lessons of the Second World War, the most devastating war in human history, which left deep scars in Europe's collective memory, including in Ukraine.

Yesterday my country marked the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation and today - the Victory Day over Nazism in the Second World War. It was 74 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. 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. In paying tribute to millions of people who perished in the Second World War, we should remember the causes, overcome the legacies and learn lessons from that tragic past.

Distinguished colleagues,

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

However, the lessons of the past have been dismissed by Ukraine's neighbor country, with whom we have been building friendly, constructive and mutually beneficial relations since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Many bilateral and multilateral treaties, signed by Russia, including the Budapest Memorandum granting security assurances to Ukraine in connection with its renunciation of the nuclear weapons, did not prevent this OSCE participating State from launching an aggression against Ukraine and flagrantly violating every single principle of the Helsinki Final Act.

Five years ago, Russia 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 has mounted the hybrid warfare against Ukraine in Donbas. This hybrid warfare continues as we speak.

The horrors of aggression and occupation by Russia invoke in the memories the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the aggressor during the Second World War.

At this very moment, the grandchildren of those who were fighting against Nazism and Fascism in the Second World War are defending their native soil against the Russian aggression. Tens of thousands of Ukrainians were killed and wounded; over 1.5 million were forced to flee their homes.

The Ukrainians have once again found themselves on the frontlines of the fight against aggressor which aims to crush freedom, democracy and rule of law.

Recalling the tragedy of the biggest armed conflict in the world, which ended 74 years ago, we underscore the imperative of doing the utmost to uphold the OSCE shared values and principles, to protect the peace and security in Europe, to stop the ongoing flagrant breach of international law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.