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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1375th MEETING OF THE OSCE
PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 May 2022

In response to the report by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

Mr. Villadsen,

We have listened attentively to your report.

The Ukrainian Government's egregious departure from its commitments, the cultivation of neo-Nazi ideas and a hatred of all things Russian, the suppression of freedom of speech and dissent, and the threat of direct physical annihilation of the population of Donbas have led to a situation that required Russia to conduct a special military operation to save civilian lives. We note the complete failure of the OSCE's work in Ukraine, which should in fact have prevented that country from sliding into lawlessness, unrestrained militarization and aggressive nationalism.

On the subject of the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, I should like to have clarified right away – on what grounds did the staff of your Office initiate fundraising at the OSCE for the needs of Ukrainian armed formations and send out the relevant mailings on this subject? Do tell us what happened to the funds raised, if you know. How much of these funds went towards financing nationalist battalions? How does all this fit in with the details of the mandate of the Co-ordinator and of all the staff of his Office, including local staff, whose work is intended to help to improve the human rights situation in Ukraine, rather than to facilitate through financial means massive violations of human rights?

We have repeatedly drawn the Permanent Council's attention to the fact that the radical political forces that came to power in Kyiv in the wake of the 2014 coup d'état have begun transforming the country under a nationalist agenda, forcibly changing the cultural and linguistic identity of Ukraine's inhabitants in an attempt to create an ethnically and linguistically solid unitary ethnocratic State. Ukraine's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity has been ignored, and a blatantly discriminatory policy pursued vis-à-vis the country's Russian and Russian-speaking inhabitants.

Focused efforts were required from the OSCE, notably through programmatic activities, to bring the Ukrainian Government back within the framework of its international obligations. We note that, during your tenure as Co-ordinator, Mr. Villadsen, you have never been able to direct this field operation towards successfully addressing the massive violations of OSCE commitments by the Ukrainian authorities. Plenty

of fine words, plenty of eye-catching names for the programmes being implemented, for which considerable funds have been allocated by all the participating States, but where is the practical impact?

Ukraine's systemic problems have not been solved. Extrajudicial reprisals against undesirable politicians and media resources, disenfranchisement of the population in the eastern regions of the country, forced Ukrainization, violation of the rights of Russian-speaking inhabitants and of national minorities, the judicial crisis and the failure to investigate high-profile crimes – all these grave ills of Ukraine that have become commonplace since 2014 have been ignored for a long time by the OSCE, including by the Project Co-ordinator. Instead, there has been this beautiful showcase for the Ukrainian Government's mythical successes in developing democracy.

We note that the situation with regard to good governance, the rule of law and the protection of human rights in Ukraine has continued to get steadily worse since the February 2014 coup d'état. Many international institutions and human rights bodies have mentioned this, but not the Office of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Today, however, the situation has deteriorated to absolutely unacceptable levels. But nothing has changed in your rhetoric regarding project activities. The same familiar words, the same terms, the same declarations of good intentions.

It is now quite obvious that the model of interaction with the host authorities selected for the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine was completely out of step with the scale of the problems that existed in that country. Instead of helping to improve Ukraine's legislation and law enforcement practices and ensure genuine respect for human rights standards, this OSCE field operation has essentially merely joined the plans of the Ukrainian authorities' foreign sponsors. And those plans are well known – to drag this country into the Euro-Atlantic structures at any cost, to the detriment of the interests of the Ukrainians themselves. Incidentally, we might recall here how, in your report to the Permanent Council in 2019, you reported on the co-ordination of your activities with the NATO and European Union missions in Ukraine. Excuse me, but you were called upon to represent our Organization, the OSCE, which comprises 57 participating States.

We repeat that the mandate of the Co-ordinator, adopted in 1999, points to the need for Ukraine to respect OSCE principles and commitments. This field operation was, after all, established to facilitate this in a practical way. We can now say with certainty that it has failed in its tasks.

Under these circumstances, we see no possibility for the continuation of the Co-ordinator's work beyond the completion of his mandate at the end of June this year. We call on the Polish Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat to work out and submit to the participating States a plan for winding up this field operation in the form of a draft Permanent Council decision, which should take account of all administrative, material and staffing issues. It is clear that the draft OSCE Unified Budget for 2022, which is in the pipeline, will also need to be adjusted accordingly. We call on the Chairmanship to promptly make the necessary adjustments so that the budget can be adopted as soon as possible.

Since I am on the subject of budgetary matters, according to information from Ukrainian governmental sources, several dozen vehicles have been transferred free of charge to the Government of Ukraine by the Co-ordinator this month. We would be grateful for detailed explanations in this regard, notably in view of the absence of any mention of such plans among the Co-ordinator's budgetary and extrabudgetary projects.

Thank you for your attention.