



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement in response to the address by Mr. Robert Rydberg,
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1275th meeting of the Permanent Council,
16 July 2020

Mr. Chairperson,

We join other delegations in warmly welcoming Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Mr. Robert Rydberg to the Permanent Council and thank him for outlining the priorities of the incoming Swedish Chairpersonship in 2021.

As the ongoing discussions on the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General and the Heads of the OSCE's Autonomous Institutions have demonstrated in the recent weeks, finding consensus within our Organization remains a formidable task. Accommodating the interests of 57 participating States requires strenuous efforts, leadership and resolve to stick to the mutually agreed set of rules and principles guiding relations between our countries.

In this vein, we sincerely appreciate Sweden's announced focus on restoring respect for the OSCE fundamental principles, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, and on the necessity to maintain the European rules-based security order. As we continue to witness the attempts by some participating States to modify the OSCE agenda and move the Organization away from its core functions with the use of various pretexts, this is a welcome step. You may count on Ukraine's full support in this regard.

In the past six years, the OSCE has demonstrated its potential in facilitating and mediating resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict, as well as mitigating its dire consequences for the conflict-affected Ukrainian citizens. Ending this conflict, based on restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, remains critical for implementing the goals put forward by the incoming Swedish Chairpersonship.

The OSCE has already invested a great deal of efforts and resources in Ukraine, most notably through substantial funding of the Special Monitoring Mission, mediation efforts within the Trilateral Contact Group and supporting the Border Observer Mission at two Russian border checkpoints. We are grateful to participating States and look forward to further increasing the efficiency of these bodies, while understanding of course that the key to solving the ongoing hot conflict in the heart of Europe rests in Kremlin.

We would expect, in particular, more focus on the situation in Crimea, the Ukrainian peninsula temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. We insist that the Special Monitoring Mission must have safe, secure and unhindered access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including Crimea, as envisaged by its mandate and demanded by the UN General Assembly, in particular in its resolution 74/168. Resolving the conflict and bringing peace back to Europe requires de-occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. Until implemented, this will continue to erode mutual trust, confidence and security in the OSCE area.

The same is true about the protracted conflicts on the territory of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. We praise the readiness of the incoming Swedish Chairpersonship to address them as a matter of priority. We strongly believe that it is the OSCE with its unique toolbox, which has to deal with the most pressing issues related to conflict prevention and conflict resolution in the sphere of its responsibility, in line with the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and relevant principles of the international law.

Let me stress in this context that we must not seek a comfortable path trying to avoid difficult topics for the sake of consensus in this Organization. We are here to find long-term solutions through substantive and subject-oriented discussions that require both political will and readiness to contribute to achievement of common goals. We have to recognize that there is an acute need to re-energize agreed negotiating formats to make better use of them in reaching sustainable - not just momentary - progress. Participating States under the Chairpersonship's leadership in close cooperation with the OSCE Secretariat and respective institutions of our Organization must concentrate on this narrative, not allowing the protracted conflicts to be the inherent part of our agenda without any progress year by year.

In this regard, Ukraine reiterates its readiness to further contribute to result-oriented negotiations in the 5+2 format in order to secure positive dynamics in the Transnistrian settlement process. The number and quality of meetings next year should provide a solid background for facilitating the contacts between the parties at different levels aimed at achieving a comprehensive political solution to the conflict.

In the politico-military dimension, Ukraine is ready to contribute to Chairpersonship's endeavors in finding efficient and targeted common responses to evolving transnational threats in the OSCE area. We are now witnessing a situation, where international organized criminal groups generate new options for modernizing their illicit activities using instability, lack of proper border control and negative effects of conflicts in their interests. In this regard, it is particularly important that the issue of border security reclaim its place as an integral part of the substantial discussions within the Security Committee.

We strongly believe that the OSCE can play a greater role in monitoring and responding to the degrading security, social and economic situation in the Sea of Azov and Black Sea region. These negative developments and their impact on the overall situation in the region have already been in the focus of the OSCE SMM.

Another important topic for 2021 that requires our particular attention is raising awareness and building strong resilience of our societies against hybrid threats, such as the use of military and non-military hybrid methods against statehood, territorial

integrity and sovereignty of participating States, their societies, their economies, their democratic institutions and freedoms, as well as meddling in election processes. We encourage the incoming Chairpersonship to initiate a comprehensive, methodical discussion on the possible contribution of our Organization, through its institutions and field missions, to strengthening the response of participating States to these challenges.

We welcome the intention of the incoming Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship to devote priority attention to the topic of environmental security challenges. Particular emphasis in this context should be given to the environmental implications of armed conflicts. The devastating environmental consequences of armed conflicts are marked by ecological degradation, illegal exploitation of natural resources and serious health risks for the local population. While the challenges in this field remain underestimated, armed conflicts continue to inflict irreversible damage to the affected regions' ecosystem, including chemical and radiological contamination of water and soil. We believe that effective engagement of our Organization is needed, in line with its comprehensive security concept, to monitor and assess the current environmental challenges in the conflict-affected areas and shape efficient responses to address them.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is the backbone of our Organization's comprehensive approach to security. Their protection in the situations of occupation remains a key challenge. We must not allow human rights be in shadow in the OSCE area, and we should continue seeking practical ways to address serious human rights violations by the Russian occupation administrations in various conflict zones throughout the OSCE area, including in the occupied territories of Georgia and Ukraine. Dialogue and inclusion, enhancing the role of the autonomous OSCE institutions, civil society, think tanks and universities needs to be an integral part of these efforts.

As the country facing complex humanitarian challenges stemming from the external hybrid aggression, Ukraine will pay proper attention to such important topics as countering state propaganda, misuse of media freedom for undermining democratic institutions and fomenting civil strife and armed conflict, addressing the plight of political prisoners, combating torture and enforced disappearance. We would appreciate the organization of the Chairpersonship's event on the challenges of internally displaced persons. The OSCE commitments extend well into the sphere of IDPs, their rights and wellbeing, but their implementation analysis was artificially excluded from the human dimension track.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our commitment to work closely with the current and future OSCE Chairpersonships on restoring respect for the OSCE principles and commitments. This remains critical to uphold the OSCE's role in maintaining secure, stable and prosperous Europe.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.