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**Chairmanship: Poland****1372nd PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 5 May 2022 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.  
Suspended: 12.50 p.m.  
Resumed: 3 p.m.  
Closed: 5.10 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador A. Hałaciński

Russian Federation (Annex 1), Chairperson

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

Chairperson, Ukraine (Annex 2), France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/657/22), Canada (Annex 3), United States of America (Annex 4), Switzerland (PC.DEL/643/22 OSCE+), Turkey (Annex 5), United Kingdom (Annex 6), Latvia (Annex 7), Georgia (Annex 8), Iceland (Annex 9), Norway (PC.DEL/641/22)

Agenda item 2: REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO

Chairperson, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (PC.FR/7/22 OSCE+), France-European Union (with the candidate countries Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well

as Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/658/22), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/646/22 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/639/22), Albania (PC.DEL/650/22 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/644/22 OSCE+), Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (PC.DEL/670/22), Turkey (PC.DEL/662/22 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Spain (Annex 10), Bosnia and Herzegovina (PC.DEL/654/22 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/642/22), Cyprus (Annex 11), Serbia (Annex 12)

Agenda item 3:            REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

- (a)    *Ongoing crimes by Ukraine against the civilian population with the support of a Western alliance of OSCE participating States*: Russian Federation (Annex 13), France-European Union, Canada, Chairperson
- (b)    *77th anniversary of victory in the Second World War*: Russian Federation (also on behalf of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) (Annex 14), Azerbaijan, Armenia
- (c)    *World Press Freedom Day*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/652/22/Corr.1), France-European Union, Moldova
- (d)    *Ongoing gross violations of the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population in some OSCE participating States*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/653/22), France-European Union, Ukraine, Canada, Germany, Switzerland
- (e)    *World Press Freedom Day, observed on 3 May 2022*: France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/659/22), Germany (also on behalf of Austria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 15), Ukraine (Annex 16), Switzerland (PC.DEL/661/22 OSCE+), Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkey (Annex 17), Turkmenistan, Tajikistan

Agenda item 4:            REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE  
   CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE

- (a)    *Visit of the Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador A. Dmochowski, and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for the Transnistrian Settlement Process, Ambassador T. Mayr-Harting, to Moldova*: Chairperson

- (b) *Conversation between the Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Mr. Z. Rau, and the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, H.E. Mr. J.-Y. Le Drian, on 28 April 2022: Chairperson*
- (c) *Meeting of the Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Mr. Z. Rau, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, H.E. Ms. E.-M. Liimets, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, H.E. Mr. E. Rinkēvičs, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, H.E. Mr. G. Landsbergis, held in Riga on 29 April 2022: Chairperson*
- (d) *Meeting between the Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Mr. Z. Rau, and the Secretary General, held in Warsaw on 5 May 2022: Chairperson*

Agenda item 5:           REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Visit of the Secretary General to Warsaw on 5 May 2022: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/54/22 OSCE+)*
- (b) *Announcement of the distribution of a written report of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/54/22 OSCE+): Director of the Office of the Secretary General*

Agenda item 6:           ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 12 May 2022, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372  
5 May 2022  
Annex 1

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1372, Point 2

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

Once again, we object to the first agenda item of today's meeting of the Permanent Council. We continue to see an obstinate refusal on the part of the Chairmanship to take into account the whole spectrum of opinions of the OSCE participating States in shaping the work programme of this key decision-making body, while at the same time ignoring the provisions of the Rules of Procedure (paragraphs IV.1(C)1 and IV.1(C)3) and the 2002 Porto Ministerial Council decision (paragraph 2). Such actions in no way contribute to the credibility of the Organization and have a blatant political bias.

We urge the Chairmanship to reconsider this approach.

We request that this statement be attached to the journal of today's meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council.

Thank you for your attention.



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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE**

Mr. Chairperson,

A week ago, at 7.21 p.m. Vienna time, two missiles hit Kyiv.

This attack was carried out when United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and President Zelenskyy were discussing how to end the war.

The missiles reached Kyiv just about an hour and a half after the OSCE Permanent Council had been adjourned. So it is possible that they were fired when the Council was still taking place.

At that meeting, as our distinguished colleagues will remember, Russia's representative mentored diplomats about professionalism and dialogue. I believe that today he will elaborate on this further.

But whenever he does this, we should bear in mind the treacherous missile attack on Kyiv. Was it perhaps Russia's invitation to a dialogue?

Was it a special message to the United Nations Secretary-General just a day after he met with Vladimir Putin in Moscow?

Or is it the only argument – a military argument – Russia's diplomats have for the civilized world?

Whatever, by this heinous act of barbarism and the daily barrages of Russian missiles on objects of civilian infrastructure throughout Ukraine, Russia once again demonstrates its attitude towards Ukraine, Europe and the world – and to the OSCE in particular.

As usual, Russia has argued that missile attacks on Ukraine are carried out with precision weapons and aim at military and strategic targets.

But the whole world could see a destroyed residential building in central Kyiv. The Ukrainian Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist Vira Hyrych was killed when the building, where she lived, was struck by a missile.

So far, in 71 days, Russian invaders have killed more than twenty Ukrainian and foreign journalists.

Yet the Russian delegation feels itself in a position to suggest an agenda item devoted to World Press Freedom Day for today's meeting.

But do Russians really have any right to speak about the press freedom after what they have done to journalism domestically and after they have literally been killing journalists in Ukraine?

There can be no doubt that this agenda item was suggested for propaganda purposes.

In view of this, we are grateful to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, who together with colleagues from Abuja, Geneva and Washington has issued a joint statement on the invasion of Ukraine and the importance of freedom of expression and information.

This cross-regional statement provides a clear-cut analysis of Russia's illegal actions, including propagation of disinformation, misinformation, incitement to violence and hatred, speech restrictions, censorship, intentional targeting of Ukraine's media and internet infrastructure, cyberattacks and so on.

Actually, Russia is attempting to eliminate freedom of speech in the region. This is a challenge that we must address properly.

Dear colleagues,

We finally have the first results of our evacuation operation from Azovstal in Mariupol.

It took a lot of effort and long negotiations. And we are especially grateful to our international partners for their hard work.

The first 156 people have arrived in Zaporizhzhia. Women and children. They had been in shelters for more than two months.

And as you will remember, only about a month ago Russia's armed formations in the temporarily occupied areas threatened to use chemical weapons on Azovstal.

However, people are still there. We have to continue doing everything possible to get out all those who are still in Mariupol and Azovstal – civilians and defenders.

Their lives are at risk, because the Russians continue massive strikes on Azovstal, persistently shelling the area with artillery and massive aerial bombardment.

Do I have to remind you again that Putin has ordered the troops not to attack Azovstal?

At the same time, Russia continues to kidnap civilians, activists and representatives of local self-government in the temporarily occupied territories.

Some of them are in prisons and pre-trial detention centres in Russia – in Kursk, in Bryansk, in Riazan, in Rostov.

Russia is keeping scores of civilians hostage, including children and women.

They are trying to exchange Ukrainian civilians for Russian military.

This is a gross violation of international humanitarian law.

But it looks normal for a terrorist State like Russia.

In the meantime, Russia continues its desperate missile terror across Ukraine.

On the evening of 3 May alone, some 18 cruise missiles were fired on Ukraine from the Caspian region.

These strikes were aimed at various Ukrainian cities in the regions of Vinnytsia, Lviv, Kyiv, Odesa, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Zakarpattia.

Eight regions – from the east to the west and from the south to the north.

As result of this attack, in Odesa region a 14-year-old teenager was killed when he was running to warn his elderly neighbours. The boy saved them but didn't survive himself.

Russia's missile terrorism must not go unpunished.

At the same time, Russia continues destroying Ukraine's civilian and critical infrastructure.

Overall, at the end of April, about 24,000 kilometres of roads and 32 million square metres of real estate had been damaged, destroyed or seized.

At least 535 kindergartens, 866 educational institutions, 231 medical institutions and 173 factories and enterprises have been damaged as a result of Russia's invasion.

The list of damaged and destroyed facilities includes at least 75 administrative buildings, 277 bridges and bridge crossings, 11 military airfields, 17 airports and 2 ports.

This is the ugly face of the war of extermination.

In parallel, Russia imposes blockade of shipments from Ukrainian ports, mines shipping routes, and methodically destroys or steals agricultural and farming equipment.

In Rubizhne, Luhansk region, Russian invaders completely destroyed the modern elevator complex built in 2020, which was capable of storing 30,000 tonnes of grain.

Moreover, Russia has already stolen about 400,000 tonnes of grain from the occupied territories, especially from the Kherson region.

So, should we be surprised now about Russian soldiers who loot Ukrainian houses and even steal toilet bowls? Obviously, looting and destruction is part of the State policy of Russia.

Expropriation of crops from farmers is reminiscent of the Soviet Government's criminal policy responsible for the mass artificial famine in Ukraine in 1921–1923, the Holodomor in 1932–1933, and the mass artificial famine in 1946–1947.

By stealing grain, Russia is following in the footsteps of the Stalinists.

Of course, many would consider the repetition of famine as something unbelievable in modern Europe.

However, today's Russia is not only following the worst Stalinist traditions.

Russia has already become deeply bogged down in uttering nonsense aimed at justifying its barbaric aggression against Ukraine.

With his recent anti-Semitic attacks, Minister Lavrov questioned the existence not only of the Ukrainian nation but also of the Holocaust.

Lavrov deliberately insulted the memory of millions of Jews who died at the hands of the Nazis during the Second World War.

Distinguished colleagues,

Russia's Foreign Ministry and diplomats also manipulatively claim that nobody paid enough attention to the developments in Ukraine that had happened before 24 February.

Well, I want to disappoint the Russian side.

We worked and will keep working until Russia is held accountable for all crimes committed in Ukraine, especially in Crimea and Donbas since 2014.

Last Saturday, Ukraine filed its reply to Russia's counter-memorial in the International Court of Justice in the terrorism financing and racial discrimination case. This case was submitted to the Court in 2017.

The Russian side is also well aware of other cases in international courts, including the International Criminal Court, that cover the events since 2014.

And we will do our best to restore justice, ensure reparations for victims, and bring all responsible to account, also for new war crimes.

According to Ukraine's Prosecutor General, specialists in DNA laboratory and other necessary equipment will work in the Bucha morgue to identify all victims. So far, 65 bodies still remain unidentified as a result of the Bucha massacre.

In co-operation with the International Commission on Missing Persons, Ukrainian prosecutors have already obtained the first DNA samples to identify victims of Russian war crimes in the settlement of Makariv, in the Kyiv region.

The first stage of the investigation into war crimes in Irpin is completed, including inspection of crime scenes and the interviewing of 228 witnesses. And the work continues in other regions as well.

Excellencies,

We sincerely believe that the OSCE is the best place to hold substantial discussions on security and peace in Europe. As a victim of unprovoked Russian aggression, Ukraine is most interested in having these discussions in place.

And we are grateful to the Polish Chairmanship for their dedication to addressing what is at present the most urgent security challenge in Europe. And we are grateful to all partners for their dedication to seeking peace in Europe.

But do we see the same dedication from the Russian delegation?

Was the Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue supported by Russia?

Russian diplomats repeatedly stated that their country was not going to attack Ukraine, didn't they?

While the Russian representative is calling for a professional dialogue, local personnel of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine are being persecuted in the occupied territories. This is blackmail, isn't it?

Russia's Foreign Minister continues to repeat that Russia has no intention of occupying Ukraine. But new reports are coming about the Russian flag being raised in settlements of the Kherson region, about plans to introduce Russian ruble there, and about intentions to annex the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in May.

And can we really trust Russia's assurances that it is committed to stability in Transnistria, considering the latest provocations in the region and Moscow's continued disregarding of Moldova's calls for an unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops and ammunition from the territory of Moldova?

So, how can we trust what Russian diplomats are saying? Are they vested with the necessary authority to speak? And how credible are their statements?

Are they aware of the real plans of their leadership? Or are they instructed simply to create a smokescreen for military operations and to whitewash the war criminals?

If Russia is really sincere about dialogue, it has to demonstrate its commitment to peace. To that end, Russia must match its actions on the ground with the words said in this hall. It must end its war of aggression and withdraw from all illegally occupied territories.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372

5 May 2022

Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This week, we marked World Press Freedom Day, a day dedicated to recognizing the importance that free and independent media play for the protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Free, independent, and diverse media is also reaffirmed in OSCE commitments as a vital element for the promotion of peace and security.

Canada commends all journalists and media workers who often have to work courageously in very challenging environments, as we have seen so vividly over the past 70 days in Ukraine, and in Russia.

In Russia, being a journalist is not only challenging, it is dangerous. Journalists and media workers are routinely detained, searched, or have their work shut down. Many have been physically attacked, and some have been murdered. Today, Russian journalists face repressive laws that aim to eliminate the very concept of free press in Russia. As we all know, any independent reporting in Russia on what the Russian military is actually doing in Ukraine – that is, the illegal war of aggression Russia is waging, the atrocities Russian troops are committing, the destruction, looting and pillaging Russia is responsible for – any mention of these truths is punishable by 15 years in prison or worse.

The Memorial Human Rights Centre – a Russian civil society organization that was honoured here in Vienna with the Democracy Defender Award yesterday for its efforts in documenting human rights violations in Russia – is being “liquidated” as Putin works to consolidate his totalitarian rule propped by his propaganda machine.

Clearly, Putin’s actions cannot stand the scrutiny of a free and independent press or of a vibrant civil society.

Mr. Chairperson,

Every week, the Russian delegation seems to feel the need to elaborate in their statements on the fact that countries supporting Ukraine by providing military support are not acting in accordance with international law. This is false. This is one of the many examples of

Russian propaganda. Russia is the aggressor. Ukraine and its people have a fundamental right to self-defence, as enshrined in the UN Charter. Countries supporting Ukraine are acting lawfully in providing Ukraine with the military assistance it needs to defend itself. Russia is only compounding the illegality of its war on Ukraine by making such bad faith arguments about the assistance that Ukraine's supporters are fully entitled to provide.

As the Kremlin's propaganda machine continues to peddle false narratives in Russia, both inventing facts out of whole cloth and muddying reality, it must be understood that propaganda will never stand in the way of accountability. The thousands of civilian casualties, many of whom are children and elderly; the mass graves captured through satellite imagery and uncovered by investigators; the illegal use of mines; forced deportations; reports and victim accounts of rapes and sexual violence; targeting of civilian infrastructure; these are all hard facts. The evidence to seek justice and accountability is overwhelming. And Russia will be held to account for the devastation and aggression in Ukraine.

Moreover, reports of repression of the Ukrainian language, forced deportations of Ukrainians, including over a hundred thousand children, efforts to deny and vilify Ukrainian culture and identity, steps to partition Ukraine's territory through the holding of sham referendums, and forced conversion to the rouble currency in Russian occupied territories, will be examined through the lens of international law, not through Russia's propaganda speeches and essays attempting to justify all of these actions.

Mr. Chairperson,

9 May is approaching, an important date for the Russian people, a date recalling an end to a brutal war against Nazism. The Russian people should be proud of their forbears in confronting and defeating this historic evil. But to "honour" Russian military acts in Ukraine on 9 May is not only a despicable valorisation of war crimes, it does an absolute disservice to the memory of those Russian soldiers who fought actual Nazis and died in the Second World War.

We call on Russia to immediately withdraw its troops, respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and stop this senseless war.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson, and I ask that my statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372

5 May 2022

Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Over the past ten weeks, the world has watched in horror as Russia's forces in Ukraine have committed atrocities of unspeakable brutality. Each reported execution or rape is evidence of a serious crime of the utmost brutality and depravity. Yet Russia's soldiers are not committing these acts in isolation. We heard from the Moscow Mechanism experts that there is indeed a clear pattern of violating international law on the part of Russia's forces. With each passing day, this pattern becomes more apparent.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is clear there is a connection between the dehumanizing rhetoric spewed by the Russian Government and its representatives, including those who sit in this Council, and the atrocities being committed by Russia's soldiers in Ukraine.

The rhetoric we repeatedly hear from Russia's representatives denies that Ukraine is historically or culturally distinct from Russia or that it has the right to exist as a sovereign, independent nation State. It tries to erase the very idea of a Ukrainian identity, and it describes the people of Ukraine in the vilest terms.

First, the Kremlin contends that Ukraine is an artificial construct, that Ukrainians and Russians are supposedly "one people," and that Ukraine's sovereignty is possible only as part of the Russian Federation. Russian President Putin wrote these very points in an essay just a few months ago.

Next, the Russian Government contends that this national identity is interchangeable with Nazism and tries to convince the Russian people into believing that the Ukrainian nation – by its very definition – is intent on waging genocide against Russians. We have seen these rhetorical devices before in history. And this hate speech is deployed on a repeat loop by Russian government officials and State media. An article published by RIA Novosti in early April called the very existence of an independent Ukraine "Nazism." If all Ukrainians – including children – are Nazis, then imagine what sort of license that gives to Russian soldiers on the front lines. A license that gets transmitted from this very Council every week.

On several occasions, Russia's leaders have also layered on the absurd claim that Ukrainian leaders are drug addicts. Drug use, they argue, is the depraved by-product of an open, democratic, Western society. The enemy, therefore, uses drugs. Patently ridiculous, but this is what they say.

Every time Russia's representative in this Council calls the people of Ukraine "Nazis," they are not referring to fascist ideology; they use the term "Nazi" as a code to mean subhuman. One Russian politician put it as follows, and it is worth quoting: "We are fighting not against people but against enemies...not against people but against Ukrainians." Pause to think about that.

Placing an entire nation outside of humanity and outside of the code of moral conduct is a frightening undertaking. The atrocities committed by Russia's forces against the people of Ukraine are the depraved outgrowth of this dehumanizing disinformation, which has been force-fed to Russia's conscripts, indeed to all of Russia's citizens, for years.

The survivors of Russia's atrocities and other abuses in Ukraine have repeatedly noted how Russia's soldiers invoked Nazism at the time they committed their crimes. Iryna Abramova recalled the morning of 5 March when a Russian commander ordered her husband, Oleh, into the street. He asked, "Where are the Nazis?" When Iryna told him there were no Nazis, the commander responded, "We have come here to die, and our wives are waiting for us, and you started this war. You elected this Nazi government." Then they told Oleh to kneel, ordered him to strip off his shirt, and shot him point-blank in the head. Recalling this, Iryna could not help but state with bewilderment, "They loved the word Nazi for some reason."

The Russian State has been so consumed by its own perverted narrative that its Foreign Minister went so far this week as to claim, as my Ukrainian colleague has pointed out, that President Zelenskyy is an anti-Semite, all in an attempt to denigrate a country that freely elected an ethnically Jewish president – and native Russian speaker, I might add – with the absurd suggestion that this is the manifestation of Nazism. Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs even went so far as to put out a public treatise that drew a parallel between Zelenskyy as the democratically elected President of Ukraine and Jews who collaborated with Nazis during the Holocaust. When the Israeli Government demanded an apology, Russia accused Israel – that's right, Israel – of supporting neo-Nazis. Though patently absurd to all of us in this Council, the Kremlin's dehumanizing lies about Nazism and Ukraine are specifically intended to lead to one preposterous conclusion: that anyone who recognizes the legitimacy of the Ukrainian State and the distinct identity and will of its people – in other words, anyone who supports a sovereign, democratic, inclusive, and independent Ukraine – must somehow also be supporting Nazis. Not even the Israeli Government is immune from this twisted logic.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Kremlin's dehumanizing lies are not merely the genesis of its atrocities; they are the foundation for the Kremlin's programme to suppress Ukrainian culture and identity. As we have said over the last few days, we have reason to believe the Russian Federation plans to attempt to forcibly annex the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "people's republics" in the coming weeks or months and that Moscow is considering a similar operation for Kherson. Russia has forced schools in areas under its control in the Kherson region to switch to the

Russian curriculum. It has forced the local population to use the Russian rouble. It has cut off the Internet and cell phone transmissions to prevent reliable, factual communications. It has also started changing the names of towns and villages in the areas it controls.

Throughout history, we have seen the dangers of dehumanizing propaganda exploited to provide a quasi-ideological justification for the most heinous of undertakings. Reports of “filtration camps” to conduct forced transfers of Ukrainian citizens into Russia are the latest example.

Mr. Chairperson,

In spite of Russia’s brutal aggression, the people of Ukraine know who they are. No amount of lies or dehumanizing disinformation from the Kremlin will change that. No bullets, no mortars or missiles can ever purge Ukraine from the hearts of its people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I request this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372  
5 May 2022  
Annex 5

Original: ENGLISH

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

Mr. Chairperson,

Ukraine continues to be the epicentre of deep humanitarian crisis, due to unjustified and unprovoked aggression of the Russian Federation.

Despite all diplomatic efforts to stop this war, the loss of human lives as well as massive destruction of Ukrainian cities continue to increase and worsen day by day. Millions of people need urgent humanitarian assistance. Thousands of civilians need life-saving assistance. Many of the elderly are in need of medical care.

As we also underlined last week, the evacuation of the civilian population is a priority. We follow the developments regarding the evacuation efforts from Mariupol closely. In the current circumstances, the facilitation of the work of the United Nations agencies in the humanitarian field in Ukraine is vital.

Saving human lives must be the first focus. The alternative to a negotiated solution is a protracted war. On this understanding, Turkey will continue to promote diplomatic talks and to alleviate the tragic humanitarian consequences of this war. Therefore, we hope that the momentum of the Istanbul meeting will be sustained. This would benefit all concerned.

Turkey stands ready to provide any help within its means and offer any support, including mediation and facilitation. Our objective has always been ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in our region.

I would like to reiterate that Turkey strongly supports the preservation of the sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters.

As a last word, I repeat our call for the remaining Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine members in detention to be released immediately.

I kindly ask, Mr. Chairperson, that our statement be attached to the journal of the day.



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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Since Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, week after week we have seen the brutality of Russia's actions.

The Russian Federation has attempted, in vain, to legitimize its war. This includes in the southern city of Kherson, where Russia has sought to assert its control of the city and surrounding areas through installing a pro-Kremlin administration. So far this administration has stated a return to Ukrainian control is "impossible" and announced a four-month currency transition to the Russian rouble from 1 May. These statements are likely indicative of Russian intent to exert strong political influence in Kherson over the long term.

We are further appalled by reports that Russia intends to stage a referendum in Kherson oblast, in an attempt to provide a pretext for consolidating its control over the area. We saw this in 2014, when Russia held an illegitimate referendum on the accession of Crimea into the Russian Federation to retrospectively justify its seizure of the peninsula. This so-called referendum was conducted in a heavily militarized environment and was clearly illegal under the Ukrainian Constitution.

The international community refused to recognize the result in Crimea in 2014. We must continue to condemn any referenda Russia attempts to illegitimately conduct on Ukrainian soil. The people of Kherson have bravely demonstrated their sovereign will to resist and remain part of Ukraine. We remain fully committed to the Ukrainian people's right to determine their future.

As my Foreign Secretary set out in her Mansion House speech last week, we need a new approach, one that melds hard security and economic security, one that builds stronger global alliances and where free nations are more assertive and self-confident. As such, we must double down on our support for Ukraine.

As part of this, the United Kingdom will carry on supplying Ukraine, alongside our partners, with weapons, funding and humanitarian aid. We will continue to provide these in response to requests from the Ukrainian Government. We have provided 220 million pounds in humanitarian aid. To date we have also sent over 90,000 ration packs, over 10 pallets of

medical equipment, more than 3,000 pieces of body armour, over 80,000 helmets and much more including communications equipment. We have also provided anti-tank missiles, air defence systems, and anti-structure munitions.

On 3 May, the United Kingdom announced that we will be providing a new package of military aid worth 300 million pounds, to support Ukraine's ongoing defence against Russia's illegal invasion. The package includes electronic warfare equipment, a counter-battery radar system, GPS jamming equipment and thousands of night vision devices.

We are also sending a fleet of protective armoured vehicles to Ukraine, to safely evacuate civilians from shelled areas in eastern Ukraine. The vehicles will also be used to transport officials from Ukrainian ministries to temporary command posts set up for government work and the rebuilding of key infrastructure, such as energy supplies, in besieged areas. The Ukrainian police and the national guard will also utilize the fleet to rebuild vital railway lines in the east of Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson,

We provide this support because Ukraine's victory is a strategic imperative for all of us. Our collective security is under threat by Russia's actions. And we will continue to support Ukraine until we have achieved our long-term goal: to ensure that no-one will ever dare to attack it again.

In the words my Prime Minister used when speaking to Ukraine's Parliament earlier this week, this is about Ukrainian democracy against President Putin's tyranny. It is about freedom versus oppression. It is also about right versus wrong. And that is why Ukraine must win.

Thank you. I kindly request that you attach this statement to the journal of the day.



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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF LATVIA**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union, but kindly allow me to add some remarks in my national capacity.

This week, on 8 May, we will mark the anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Did the Second World War and its atrocities end for everyone on that date? For many it did, and that we indeed have to celebrate.

By “we” I mean the countries that, irrespective of the side they took during the Second World War, celebrate or commemorate the end of that war on 8 May. And most of the allies who won the Second World War do indeed celebrate the end of it on 8 May.

But obviously, the end of the Second World War is not an issue and definitely not a current issue to be discussed at the Permanent Council – there is nothing current about an event that took place decades ago. However, the reason why we look at history is to learn from the mistakes we have made in order not to repeat them.

Unfortunately, Russia, with the help of Belarus, is doing exactly the opposite.

Not only did the Second World War atrocities not end for countries that remained under Russian occupation after 8 May 1945, but Russia is still continuing those atrocities today – in Ukraine.

Filtration camps, extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, torture, deportations.

As the distinguished Representative of the United States of America, H.E. Mr. M. Carpenter, put it at last week’s Permanent Council meeting (and similarly today) when speaking about reports on “filtration camps” set up by Russia now: “Colleagues, what these reports describe brings back horrific memories of a bygone era.”

On 8 May 1945, a certain regime and certain countries were defeated. But unfortunately, the ideas that were at the core of the atrocities committed during the Second World War were not defeated. They were and still are carried on – under a new definition.

After the Second World War a new definition was crafted for the atrocity known by the newly coined word “genocide”, and in 1948, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted, entering into force in 1951.

Yesterday, at the US Helsinki Commission hearing on Russia’s war crimes in Ukraine, Professors Benedek, Bílková and Sassòli presented the report of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism. At the hearing, Timothy Snyder, Professor of History at Yale University, concluded that all five acts constituting the crime of genocide under the Genocide Convention had been carried out by Russia in Ukraine, as is confirmed by testimonies and the Moscow Mechanism report itself.

Professor Snyder also pointed out that Russia’s reducing the language of the Second World War to a kind of hate speech by calling its victims in Ukraine “Nazis” is in itself one more element of a genocidal policy.

I wish that this week we could mark not only the end of the Second World War but also the end of all the kind of atrocities we now know happened during that war.

Unfortunately, this will not be the case.

Those of us who cherish, have access to and can benefit from the free and independent media see for ourselves every day on the news that such atrocities are continuing to be carried out by Russia in Ukraine.

But freedom of the media is like 8 May – it is not celebrated by all.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson, and I kindly ask for this statement to be attached to the journal of the day.



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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF GEORGIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

We align with the statement delivered by the delegation of the European Union. In addition, allow me to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

As we have entered the third month of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, there seems to be no end in sight to its devastating human suffering and destruction. Along with heavy fighting in Donbas, in recent days the Russian forces repeatedly launched co-ordinated missile attacks on Lviv, Kyiv, Odesa, Vinnytsia and other Ukrainian towns and cities, inflicting further damage.

We once again strongly condemn the massive human rights and international humanitarian law violations by the occupation forces and call for accountability for these heinous crimes. We remain concerned over the reports of continuous forced deportations of Ukrainians to Russia, including children, killings, torture, rape, abductions, enforced disappearances and other egregious human rights violations.

While we welcome the evacuation of over 150 civilians from the Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol with the involvement of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross, we believe that these efforts should continue unabated to assist many others, among them children, who remain trapped in war-affected areas.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are concerned over the reports of the so-called expropriation of crops by the Russian forces from the farmers in the occupied territories. These actions combine with the continuous blockade of shipments from Ukrainian ports to put further strain on global food security, which according to the United Nations is already endangered as a result of this war.

Mr. Chairperson,

We call on Russia to stop its aggression, comply with the order of the International Court of Justice, and withdraw all its forces and armaments from the territory of Ukraine.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Georgia's unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea and Donbas, and Ukraine's navigational rights in its territorial waters.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372

5 May 2022

Annex 9

Original: ENGLISH

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF ICELAND**

While Iceland fully aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union, allow me also to make additional remarks in my national capacity.

Iceland strongly condemns the war of aggression waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. This premeditated invasion by Russia has caused incomprehensible harm and suffering for the Ukrainian people, a humanitarian catastrophe, and has forced over 5.5 million people to flee Ukraine and left close to 8 million people internally displaced. It has undermined the international rule of law and endangered security on a global scale.

Russia has attempted to justify its breach of the prohibition on the use of force enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations through distortion of truth, propaganda, and a full-blown disinformation campaign – also in this very room.

Let us be clear that the international community sees through the lies. We have witnessed Russia's aggression, the unspeakable atrocities committed in Ukrainian cities and towns, and continued grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law by the Russian Federation such as indiscriminate targeting, the use, as evidence indicates, of rape as a weapon of war, and environmental destruction.

We have witnessed unspeakable monstrosities none of us would have ever been able to imagine taking place.

Iceland fully supports the full use of all available international mechanisms, means and measures, including the immediate investigation of war crimes in Ukraine, to ensure accountability for the brutal crimes and violations of international humanitarian law committed during Russia's unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine. Through the Moscow Mechanism we were able to compile evidence, document valuable data, and establish unequivocally important facts.

Russia will be held accountable.

We commend the work of all actors who are engaged in the incredibly important and sometimes dangerous work of documenting, investigating, and reporting on what is happening in Ukraine, including journalists and media workers.

Media freedom is inseparable from the universal right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right is at the heart of democratic societies and is protected by our core human rights documents and enshrined in OSCE documents. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, said on World Press Freedom Day: “Without freedom of the press, there is no freedom.”

The Russian Federation has suspended access to information within its borders and is thus restricting the ability of citizens to receive information on the war its government is waging against Ukraine. To quote Reporters Without Borders: “Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, almost all independent media have been banned, blocked and/or declared ‘foreign agents’. All others are subject to military censorship.”

We express our grave concern over the immense restriction of freedom of expression and threats to their personal safety that journalists face within the Russian Federation. Russian journalists can face 15 years in prison for reporting on the truth of what the Russian armed forces are committing in their name.

This is unacceptable. The situation Russia has created within and outside its borders is unacceptable.

Again, let us also reiterate the important role of women. One of the key findings of UN Women’s Rapid Gender Analysis, published on 4 May, concerning the situation in Ukraine is that women are playing a crucial role in the humanitarian response but are not fully involved in decision-making. We reiterate that this must change, and I quote Secretary-General Guterres: “Women must be included in decision-making processes related to humanitarian efforts, peace-making and other areas that directly impact their lives.”

We urge Russia to withdraw its troops, stop waging this war, and to fully abide by its international commitments. This cannot and must not escalate any further.

Mr. Chairperson, I ask that my statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372

5 May 2022

Annex 10

ENGLISH

Original: SPANISH

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 2

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF SPAIN**

Mr. Chairperson,

Spain endorses the statement made by the European Union under this agenda item, and I should like once again to express our support for the important work performed by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo together with other international institutions present in the territory of Kosovo. I should also like to thank Ambassador Michael Davenport for his statement and activity report, and to express our appreciation for the work that he has been carrying out together with his team.

Mr. Chairperson,

Like other participating States, Spain does not recognize the territory of Kosovo as a State and is of the view that any action concerning the OSCE Mission in Kosovo should be in keeping, as a frame of reference, with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Achieving progress in the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Priština dialogue is a prerequisite for both parties to be able to make headway in their respective paths towards Europe. In that regard, the territory of Kosovo has, in the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, its own specific framework for relations.

Spain continues to believe that dialogue and negotiation are the only possible way of resolving the dispute over the territory of Kosovo, and wishes to make constructive use of its good offices in order to expedite that.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372  
5 May 2022  
Annex 11

Original: ENGLISH

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 2

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF CYPRUS**

Mr. Chairperson,

The Republic of Cyprus fully subscribes to the statement made by the European Union, but I would like to add some remarks in a national capacity.

The delegation of the Republic of Cyprus joins other delegations in welcoming the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Michael Davenport, back to the Permanent Council. We would like to thank Ambassador Davenport for his statement and comprehensive report and to express our appreciation for the important work carried out by the Mission.

Like other participating States, the Republic of Cyprus does not recognize the 2008 Unilateral Declaration of Independence by Kosovo. In this context, we would like to stress that any initiative with regard to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo must be consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999), which along with Permanent Council Decision No. 305 of 1 July 1999 provides the Mission with its mandate.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Republic of Cyprus supports the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and the efforts of the EU Special Representative Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, and encourages the sides to continue working constructively with the Special Representative on all the principles governing this process.

I would like to request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 2

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF SERBIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome Ambassador Davenport to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report. Serbia reiterates its support for the work of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK), carried out within the framework of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 and in a status-neutral manner. We value the reporting by the Mission and its five regional offices and their follow-up on cases with an inter-ethnic component. We stress the importance of the programmatic activities focused on upholding community and human rights, access to justice, language compliance and property rights, sustainable return of internally displaced persons, protection of cultural heritage, and inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Although decreasing, ethnically motivated incidents persist, especially ones targeting the Serbian community, which remains, according to the Mission's report, "the most affected in comparison to other non-majority communities". According to the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, 81 ethnically motivated incidents affecting the Serbian community were recorded in the reporting period. Serbs in the province are confronted with continuous intimidation, physical assaults, hate speech, movement restrictions, and denial of their religious rights or rights to fair trials.

We appreciate the Mission's efforts to improve co-ordination of the return and reintegration of displaced persons in the framework of the Skopje Process. However, the number of returnees remains marginal. More than 200,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have still not been able to return to their homes. To put that into proper perspective – the number of IDPs in central Serbia is almost twice as high as the number of Serbs living in Kosovo and Metohija. The shamefully low number of returns correlates with a high number of ethnically motivated incidents targeting returnees and their property. In addition, there are over 43,000 unresolved court proceedings on property rights of Kosovo Serbs. As stated in the 2021 European Commission Kosovo Report, "the conditions for a truly multi-ethnic and integrated society throughout Kosovo are not fully in place. The need for a secure environment, especially in areas where returnees live, and to ensure access to property, personal documentation, language rights, and adequate provisions for education, employment and social welfare, are still barriers."

As Foreign Minister Nikola Selaković stated during the meeting of the United Nations Security Council on 20 April, “we would like to see a clear political will and measures to prove that discrimination on national grounds is not a desirable social value in Kosovo and Metohija, and that coexistence is possible and necessary.”

Mr. Chairperson,

The Report also records the continued desecration of cemeteries and historical monuments, graffiti, theft, burglary and damage to cultural and religious heritage. There were four cases of desecration of Serbian Orthodox cemeteries, in the municipalities of Prizren, Kosovo Polje, Gračanica and Istok. Illegal construction was reported in the Special Protective Zone of the Monastery of Saint Uroš in Uroševac. Regardless of continuous calls on the part of the international community, OMIK and the Quint countries, the lawful registration of the land of Visoki Dečani Monastery, in line with the 2016 decision of the so-called Constitutional Court, is still pending.

We therefore encourage the Mission to continue monitoring institutional responses to such attacks and non-enforcement of court decisions, and to continuously report on threats to Serbian cultural and religious heritage and that of other communities. In this respect, we welcome the finalization of the Mission’s report on protection of cultural heritage in Kosovo and Metohija, to be launched in May, which will hopefully offer a realistic picture of the threats to Serbian cultural and religious heritage and that of other communities, and consequently lead to appropriate reactions, often absent in the past, from the authorities.

Mr. Chairperson,

The arbitrary denial of visits by officials from central Serbia continued throughout the reporting period, despite the timely announcement of such visits in line with the agreed procedures. As indicated in the Report, the Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Petar Petković, was denied entry to the province three times. On the first occasion he was intending to visit the Visoki Dečani Monastery and to deliver assistance to several socially vulnerable and returnee families. As European Union spokesperson Stano stressed on 16 December: “Director Petković’s visit to Kosovo was appropriately announced in accordance with the agreement, so it should have been allowed.” Such indiscriminate denials clearly undermine the Mission’s attempts to rebuild inter-ethnic trust and people-to-people contact.

Mr. Chairperson,

All this indicates that the operational context in which the Mission conducts its activities is not favourable. The reporting period was marked by a number of unilateral decisions by the Priština authorities, such as the introduction of the new provisions for Serbian licence plates on 20 September 2021 and the recent refusal to enable Kosovo Serbs to cast their votes in their local communities during the 16 January constitutional amendments referendum and the 3 April regular presidential and early parliamentary elections.

Incursions of heavily armed formations composed exclusively of ethnic Albanians into the north of Kosovo and Metohija, with excessive use of force, occurred on

19 September and 13 October. On 13 October – the ninth such incursion in contravention of the Brussels Agreement – members of the special police shot Srećko Sofronijević from Zvečan in the back. This was followed, under various pretexts and motives, by four incursions of special units into the Serb-majority southern municipality of Štrpce on 21 December, 6 January, 16 March and 8 April. On 12 January, the eve of the Orthodox New Year celebrations, special forces raided the municipality building in Gračanica and searched its premises. It is clear that such provocations unnecessarily destabilize the situation on the ground, intimidate Serbs in both north and south, exacerbate divisions between communities, and further complicate the Belgrade-Priština dialogue.

Speaking of the Belgrade-Priština dialogue, allow me to note that on 19 April we marked nine years since the signing of the Brussels Agreement with its most important section on the establishment of the Community of Serb Municipalities. We reiterate our deepest regret that after almost a decade, the authorities in Priština have not felt it necessary to take any steps towards its establishment. Therefore, we once again urge all international stakeholders to exercise necessary pressure and not to allow Priština to ignore its obligations regarding the establishment of the Community.

Allow me to recall that Belgrade has not taken any countermeasures, because it seeks to preserve peace in this part of Europe. We urge Priština to meaningfully engage in the EU-facilitated dialogue and implement obligations stemming from the 2013 Brussels Agreement.

As President Aleksandar Vučić stated after yesterday's meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, "Belgrade will do everything to ensure that a compromise solution to the Kosovo and Metohija issue is found." Therefore we call on all States and international organizations to lend their unreserved support to the dialogue, as a crucial contribution to the peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Chairperson,

Before concluding, let me briefly comment on some of today's statements.

We have heard on so many occasions that we need to build trust and confidence and go back to dialogue and patient negotiation. Once a potential solution is reached within the Belgrade-Priština dialogue, it will also be implemented in the OSCE. Until that moment, irresponsible statements such as the one heard today calling for Priština's officials to be included in OSCE meetings are not conducive to the continuation of meaningful dialogue. On the contrary, they only serve to exacerbate and multiply divisions.

Regarding meetings with the so-called recipients of OSCE assistance on the ground, we believe it is necessary to be precise: there is no established practice of inviting officials from Priština. There were individual cases, and they were contested. We firmly stand by our position that these calls are unacceptable and go against the Organization's status-neutral position towards Kosovo and Metohija.

Finally, allow me to wish Ambassador Davenport all the best in his future endeavours.

I kindly ask that our statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372

5 May 2022

Annex 13

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 3(a)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

On the orders of the Ukrainian Government, paramilitary Ukrainian nationalist battalions and soldiers of the Ukrainian armed forces continue to commit crimes on a large scale against the civilian population of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), a number of liberated towns in south-eastern Ukraine and in territories occupied by the Ukrainian military. Using civilians as human shields, they are intensifying their shelling of non-military objects. Furthermore, there have been reports of civilian infrastructure being used for military purposes.

Over the past few days, a dramatic situation has arisen at the Azovstal plant in the city of Mariupol in the Donetsk People's Republic. This city was fully liberated by the Russian armed forces and DPR units at the end of April. It is gradually returning to a peaceful life, as staff members of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who visited the city were able to see for themselves. Meanwhile, neo-Nazis from the Azov battalion, who are holding dozens of civilians hostage, are still ensconced in the plant's industrial zone.

Following joint humanitarian efforts by Russia and the United Nations, with the ICRC's involvement, it proved possible to persuade the Ukrainian side to allow civilians to safely leave the Azovstal plant and nearby houses. More than one hundred people had been evacuated as part of this humanitarian operation by 3 May. Fifty-seven of them decided to stay in the DPR, 69 headed for territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces. Incidentally, Ukrainian and Western propaganda have been actively spreading fake stories about how the Russian military allegedly subjected Mariupol residents to some kind of "forced filtration activities". These insinuations were dispelled by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, Osnat Lubrani, who stressed once the evacuation was completed that during the screening of evacuees conducted by the Russian military, no means of coercion were used to force people to leave for Russia.

On 3 May, Azov battalion fighters moved to firing positions near the Azovstal buildings and started shelling again, violating the ceasefire. The Russian and DPR Ministries of Defence took the decision to neutralize the Azov fighters' firing points in order to protect

the civilians of Mariupol. In this regard, repeated appeals to the fighters to surrender, including the assurance that their lives will be spared, are being stubbornly ignored. The other day, the nationalists showed their true attitude towards the civilians they are holding hostage when they offered to exchange them for food and medical supplies. According to the humanitarian operation headquarters, the nationalists also said that they would not release any further hostages just like that. Nevertheless, the Russian armed forces will open a humanitarian corridor from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. (Moscow time) on 5, 6 and 7 May to enable civilians to leave the plant.

In the military operation zone, the Russian armed forces and DPR and LPR military formations continue to detain foreign mercenaries as they attempt to flee or abandon their combat positions. They include, for example, the recently detained British citizens Andrew Hill, Shaun Pinner and Aiden Daniel John Aslin, and Moroccan national Ibrahim Saadun.

The Kyiv regime continues to move demonstratively closer to radical paramilitary nationalist groups. In mid-April, it was announced that the so-called Right Sector Ukrainian Volunteer Corps had been incorporated into the Ukrainian armed forces as a separate military unit. We would remind you that this Nazi formation is responsible for hundreds of punitive sallies into the DPR and the LPR, along with acts of intimidation on Ukrainian territory.

In an attempt to organize a witch-hunt, representatives of the Kyiv regime have launched a campaign of persecution against Russian citizens who are legally present in Ukraine. On 29 April, the director of Ukraine's State Bureau of Investigation, Oleksii Sukhachev, announced that the intelligence services would be subjecting these individuals to "filtration measures" (so there you have the ones conducting "forced filtration"! ). As for Ukrainian citizens, fighters from territorial defence battalions, together with the intelligence services, are conducting raids in search of residents who express pro-Russian views or criticize the Ukrainian authorities – such actions recently took place in Kharkiv and its environs. Many people were taken to an unknown destination, and a number of individuals never returned home. According to reliable reports, similar large-scale raids have previously been carried out in Mykolaiv, Sumy, Chernihiv and a number of other towns.

With direct support from the West, the Kyiv regime continues to systematically violate international humanitarian law. This is being done with the aim of inflicting damage on the civilian population so as to then cast the blame for everything on the actions of the Russian military and, thereby, discredit the Russian armed forces. Here are just a few recent examples from the past week.

In the town of Marhanets in the Dnipropetrovsk region, Ukrainian militants have mined the dam of the Mykolaivske reservoir, which, if blown up, would leave the town itself and neighbouring settlements with a population of over 45,000 in a possible flood zone.

In the settlement of Raihorodok in the Kramatorsk district (DPR territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces), neo-Nazis have set up firing points on the upper floors of residential buildings and ammunition stores in the basements, and citizens are being forcibly detained in their apartments. Nearby, in Sviatohirsk, militants have deployed artillery and multiple-launch rocket systems on the territory of the Holy Dormition Lavra, while over a hundred civilians (clergy, novitiates and refugees) remain in the monastery.

In Mykolaiv, multiple-launch rocket systems, armoured vehicles and cars carrying ammunition have been deployed at schools No. 6 and No. 7, and residents have not been evacuated from nearby houses. Furthermore, nationalists have set up firing positions at the Mykolaiv boarding school for deaf children, at general educational institutions in Odessa (school No. 40), Dnipropetrovsk (schools No. 2 and No. 28, boarding school No. 2), Kramatorsk (schools No. 6 and No. 9), Sloviansk (school No. 14), Kharkiv (schools No. 73 and No. 145, lyceum No. 161, grammar school No. 14) and others.

In Barvinkove in the Kharkiv region, the Ukrainian armed forces have set up a strongpoint in the building of the regional psychiatric hospital and are forcibly detaining civilians in the basement.

In the Kherson region liberated by the Russian military, a torture chamber installed by Ukrainian militants was discovered, where a booby-trapped body without legs, dressed in a military uniform and showing signs of brutal abuse was found. Drug paraphernalia and boxes used to store US-made missile systems were found nearby.

Against this backdrop, NATO countries, continuing their dangerous militarization of Ukraine, are using its territory as a dumping ground for weapons and ammunition that are long past their shelf life. They are flooding Ukraine with decommissioned equipment from depots and getting rid of leftover Soviet weapons stored in Eastern European countries, including Poland (which has become a logistics hub for this purpose). They are also sending heavy weapons produced in NATO countries.

All these efforts, however, are not capable of reversing the situation on the ground. They merely increase the price, measured in human lives and suffering, that Ukraine is paying for the *de facto* loss of its sovereignty as a result of the February 2014 coup d'état and the installation of a militaristic nationalist regime that is being directly steered from outside the country.

On 28 April, the Congress of the United States of America approved the so-called Lend-Lease Act (the document must be signed by US President Joe Biden for it to enter into force). It provides for Ukraine and the wider region to be militarily “beefed up” with more than 33 billion dollars’ worth of heavy weapons. Remarkably, this bill was introduced back in January, long before the start of the Russian special military operation, which merely confirms the US Government’s plans for the militarization and military assimilation of the territory of Ukraine. It should be noted in this regard that, whereas during the Second World War US Lend-Lease assistance contributed to the crushing of Nazism through the joint efforts of the Allies in the anti-Hitler coalition, today this mechanism is being used by the United States to boost the Ukrainian armed forces and neo-Nazi formations waging war against otherwise-minded people in their own country.

For a long time now, the US Government has also made no secret of the true goal of its policy in Ukraine – namely, to inflict a “strategic defeat” on Russia in the region courtesy of the Ukrainian nationalists, that is, to undermine Russian statehood and obstruct the sustainable development of our country. An exceedingly audacious goal, it goes without saying. As we have already stressed, in practice this is not about “defending democracy”,

much less about concern for the well-being of the Ukrainian people, whom the US Government has essentially made a pawn in its geopolitical game.

We emphasize that all weapons supplied by Western countries to Ukraine to kill Russian, Ukrainian, DPR and LPR citizens are legitimate military targets within the Russian special operation. The movement of such weapons along transport routes and via hubs used for passenger traffic constitutes a provocative gambit by the Kyiv regime and its foreign handlers, which is calculated to increase unjustified risks for the civilian population. Let us emphasize once again: civilians are not being targeted by the special operation and the Russian military is making every effort possible to ensure their safety.

The long-standing training programmes in the “art of war” by instructors from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and other NATO countries are in line with NATO’s destructive actions. They imparted combat skills to the radical nationalists who were integrated into the armed forces and law enforcement agencies of Ukraine as part of the 2015–2016 campaign.

The Kyiv regime has made no secret of its involvement in the Ukrainian State’s cyberattacks at the international level. In an interview with the Spanish newspaper *El País* on 27 April, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov admitted that the Kyiv regime had “launched over 660 cyberattacks and denial-of-service attacks against businesses, companies, banks and institutions in Russia and Belarus”. He also added that the Ukrainian Government deliberately organizes such cyberattacks, enlisting hackers via social media sites on which such “special assignments” are posted. Thus, the Kyiv regime has made Ukraine the first Member State of the United Nations and the first OSCE participating State to announce the organization, at the State level, of massive cyberattacks against other countries.

Here is another recent example. Live on the Ukraine-24 television channel, Viktor Andrusiv, adviser to the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, literally said the following: “Unfortunately, we cannot invade Transdnistria. We cannot do this without the permission of Moldova.” According to him, for the Kyiv regime an invasion of Transdnistria “would be a good opportunity to obtain a bargaining chip, in order, among other things, to exchange the situation in Transdnistria for Mariupol”. Is this what the Kyiv regime’s peaceful aspirations, which its Western handlers so often talk about, really look like? And what kind of invasion scenarios are being simulated – an invasion with the help of a NATO-trained military?

The regime in Kyiv is banking on the creation of threats to neighbouring States, on continued militarization and on the support of aggressive nationalism. It is refusing to engage in diplomatic contacts to resolve the situation, as President Zelenskyy, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council Oleksii Danilov, Ukrainian Ambassador to the United Kingdom Vadym Prystaiko and others publicly confirmed recently. We note a trend: the more high-ranking “political tourists” from Western countries visit Kyiv, the less willing the Kyiv regime is to engage in diplomacy and the more belligerent is its stance. To all appearances, on the advice of its foreign handlers, the course has been set to fight “down to the last Ukrainian” for the ideas of Ukrainian nationalism and neo-Nazism. Such a path is ruinous for Ukraine.

In an attempt to shape an alternative reality in public discourse, including that of the OSCE, in which Russia is allegedly isolated in its approach to Ukraine, the United States and its satellites are persistently repeating familiar mantras. At the same time, they deliberately remain silent about their destructive activities over many years in that country, namely facilitating the unconstitutional change of power, encouraging aggressive nationalism, neo-Nazism and other discriminatory practices, and militarizing Ukraine while the standard of living of people in the country suffered a catastrophic decline. They take the liberty of speaking on behalf of the entire international community in this very room.

We would remind you that we are in full agreement with the assessments voiced by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 29 April this year and by our other partners and allies: the United States bears unshirkable responsibility for the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis as it broke its promise and continuously pushed for NATO's eastward expansion. One cannot but also recall here the words of Pope Francis, who stressed in an interview with *Corriere della Sera* on 3 May that the current critical situation around Ukraine had been caused by "NATO barking at Russia's doors". Let us add to that the fact that the West's botched geopolitical experiments on Ukraine after the 2014 coup d'état it had supported led to the country becoming the poorest in Europe by 2020, according to the International Monetary Fund.

In three days' time, the world will mark the 77th anniversary of victory over Nazism in the Second World War. In the first half of the twentieth century, Nazism metastasized like a cancerous tumour in crisis-stricken Germany and affected many nations, nearly destroying all of Europe – ultimately almost destroying even the whole world, which was at the time offered a "new, rules-based world order". Rules defined by the minority for the majority. Rules according to which only a select few had the right to sustainable development. Rules under which the right to a self-determining path was not guaranteed to anyone. Rules that divided people into different classes, limited their rights or even deprived them of their lives depending on their ethnicity, language or beliefs. Rules that systematically destroyed international law and then free humanity itself.

History is to a considerable extent cyclical. Today, we are once again seeing ideas of hatred and racial and national superiority rearing their ugly head in parts of Europe. The most tragic example of this is present-day Ukraine, where the "Maidan victors", who received carte blanche from the West in 2014, have made the idea of Ukrainian exceptionalism and ethnic and linguistic superiority central to the State-building process.

The actions of the representatives of the Kyiv regime over these years, especially in recent weeks, speak for themselves: they want to quickly get rid of everything that evokes the liberation of Ukraine from the Nazi invaders and the victory of the Soviet people over Nazism in the Second World War. At the instigation and with the approval of the authorities, monuments to the heroes and liberators are being destroyed, and there have been dozens of acts of vandalism.

Here are just a few examples of memorials destroyed in the last two months alone. In Kharkiv, a bust of the distinguished military leader of the victory over Nazism, Marshal Georgy Zhukov, was savagely demolished with the aid of a dumper truck. In Dnipropetrovsk, a stele with four stars dedicated to him as a Hero of the Soviet Union was dismantled. Similarly, the bust of the commander of the first Ukrainian front and participant

in the liberation of Ukraine, Nikolay Vatutin, was also destroyed with a dumper truck in the settlement of Velyki Komiaty in Zakarpattia. In Rivne, a monument to Nikolay Kuznetsov, legendary among those who fought against Nazism, has been demolished, and slabs with the names of heroes of the Great Patriotic War destroyed. Nearby, in the town of Dubno, a memorial to the liberating Soviet soldiers was destroyed yesterday. In Chernivtsi the monument to the Red Army soldiers who liberated the city from the Nazis was also dismantled. The monument to a notable representative of the anti-fascist partisan movement, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, has been destroyed in Chernihiv. In Lutsk, municipal services desecrated the Eternal Glory memorial, from which symbols of the victory over Nazism were removed. The same thing also happened in Lviv at the Hill of Glory memorial (and six months before that the municipal authorities had demolished the Victors over Nazism monument on Stryiska Street). A series of attacks by vandals were carried out in the Lviv region: the Eternal Flame memorial was dismantled in the city of Drohobych; the monument to those who fought against Nazism was demolished in the city of Stryi; in Boryslav a stele in honour of the town's liberation from the Nazi invaders was dismantled. The monument to a liberating soldier was destroyed in Kremenets in the Ternopil region. In the centre of Mukachevo in the Zakarpattia region, an obelisk of Glory in honour of the Soviet soldiers who gave their lives to liberate the region from Nazism was destroyed, with the desecration of the graves of those interred there announced by the city authorities. T-34 tanks, which had been set up as symbols of the victory over Nazism, were torn down from their pedestals in various Ukrainian towns and cities – this happened in Rivne, Storozhynets, Volodymyr-Volynskyi and Mukachevo, among other places.

The destruction of the memorial in Odessa to the city's defenders against Nazism in 1941 was the height of cynicism. Here it is worth going into more detail. On 2 May, the residents of this city marked the eighth anniversary of the events of 2014, when Maidan supporters, chanting "glory to Ukraine", murdered and burned dozens of Odessa residents who had stood up for a life without Ukrainian Nazism. In the intervening years, the leaders of post-Maidan Ukraine and their foreign handlers have done everything to ensure that the truth about those terrible events is not revealed. For eight years, the relatives of the victims have been deprived of the right to legal retribution and punishment for the true perpetrators of what happened. Is this what the "glory of Ukraine" amounts to? If the Kyiv regime is unable, or rather does not want, to ensure that justice is served – it will be done by other competent authorities. Justice will surely prevail, vindicating the memory of the peaceful residents of Odessa who lost their lives there on 2 May 2014.

There is no point in asking the Permanent Representative of Ukraine questions in this connection: no matter what he says about the memory of the victims in the fight against Nazism, these words mean nothing. We are dealing with a full-scale and unprecedented campaign by the Kyiv regime to destroy monuments and other evidence of that struggle; with the glorification at the State level of Nazi criminals such as Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych, who inspired the murder of Ukrainian citizens of various nationalities for the sake of the idea of Ukrainian national exclusivity; and with support from the authorities for those who from 2014 to the present day continue to do the same thing bedecked with Nazi symbols.

The Russian special military operation in Ukraine is designed to put an end to neo-Nazism, ensure the demilitarized status of that country and restore the good-neighbourly, historically close relations between two Slavic peoples.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of today's meeting of the Permanent Council.

Thank you for your attention.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372

5 May 2022

Annex 14

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 3(b)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, BELARUS,  
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN,  
SERBIA, TAJIKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN)**

Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honour to read out a joint statement by the Permanent Representatives to the OSCE of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and my country, the Russian Federation, on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of victory in the Second World War.

“This year the world will mark the 77th anniversary of victory in the Second World War, the greatest ordeal endured by humanity in the twentieth century.

“This page of our common history was turned victoriously thanks to the unparalleled feat of the peoples who fought selflessly against the ideology of hostility, enslavement and misanthropy and achieved the long-awaited Great Victory. The memory of those years of suffering, harsh trials and tragic events of truly unimaginable proportions echoes in eternity.

“Our peoples travelled the road of hardship and sorrow, yet at the same time of heroic bravery and resilience, courage, self-sacrifice and love, faith in justice and the righteousness of their cause. With deepest gratitude we bow our heads to their immortal exploits. It is our duty today to convey to posterity the true picture of those events and to safeguard the historical truth about the Second World War.

“In that connection, we believe attempts to falsify history and revise the outcome of the war to be completely unacceptable. We strongly condemn the destruction and desecration of monuments to the liberating soldiers and other acts of vandalism against memorial sites and burial places of soldiers and officers who died for the liberation of Europe and Asia from Nazism and fascism.

“There is no justification for attempts to rehabilitate and glorify Nazi criminals and their accomplices or to deny that they committed crimes against humanity and war crimes during the Second World War, nor is there a statute of limitations on the judgments of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. In that connection, we welcome the United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted on 16 December 2021 on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The fact that the overwhelming majority of States on the planet vote for this resolution year after year testifies to a global desire to prevent the repetition of the mistakes of the past. We consider this as a unifying agenda for a constructive future.

“We urge the international community to be respectful of the memory of those who fought against Nazism during the Second World War. We firmly believe that Nazism, having been defeated, must never raise its head on the Eurasian continent or anywhere else in the world.”

I thank you for your attention and request that the text of this statement be attached to the journal of today’s meeting of the Permanent Council.



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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 3(e)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY  
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF AUSTRIA, CANADA, DENMARK,  
ESTONIA, FINLAND, FRANCE, GREECE, LATVIA, LITHUANIA,  
MONTENEGRO, THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, SWEDEN, THE  
UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

Mr. Chairperson,

I am speaking on behalf of Austria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, a group of participating States devoted to the safety of journalists. I am speaking on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, a day the members of the United Nations have collectively devoted to press freedom and to honour the courage of journalists and media actors from all over the OSCE area for their work.

The right to freedom of expression as exercised by journalists and media actors is crucial to democracy, and the rule of law as well as the protection and promotion of all human rights. Without independent, free, and pluralistic media both online and offline, citizens' ability to hold those in power to account suffers. The ability of journalists to work safely allows all persons to obtain information that can inform and educate and maintain peaceful, inclusive, and equitable societies.

In too many participating States, however, journalists and media actors continue to be harassed, intimidated and even killed. In too many cases, threats of violence and attacks against journalists and media actors are not investigated and prosecuted as thoroughly as we committed to in Milan in 2018. This emboldens the perpetrators of crimes and has a further chilling effect on freedom of expression in our societies.

Mr. Chairperson,

Today, we particularly condemn the flagrant and systematic assault on media freedom and independent journalists by the Russian Federation and Belarus.

In the session of the Permanent Council on 7 April, we brought to its attention the cruel fate of journalists and media actors – at least seven as of now – who have been killed

since 24 February in the course of their journalistic work, while covering the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. Professors Benedek, Bílková, and Sassòli have elaborated on these cases in their report of the Moscow Mechanism, stating that: "There are also many cases where journalists have been detained or abducted by the Russian forces", and quoting "well documented and verified" NGO reports concerning cases of ill-treatment and use of methods amounting to torture against journalists and media actors. We strongly condemn these violent assaults on journalists and media actors as well as all efforts to silence independent media coverage within the Russian Federation itself. We are deeply concerned about the exploitation of the media to spread harmful disinformation and the use of draconian media restrictions, all of which curtail freedom of expression and deprive individuals of their right to access independent news and factual information. We echo the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Ribeiro, who in her statement dated 16 March, warned against "measures taken by [... Russian Federation] authorities that have wiped out media freedom and drastically infringed on the safety of journalists in [...Russia]", qualifying it as "one of the worst declines in media freedom" since the creation of her mandate.

We urgently call on the Russian Federation to immediately end its attacks on independent media at home and abroad and to respect the rights of journalists and media actors in accordance with international human rights law, international humanitarian law and OSCE commitments and to cease its massive disinformation campaigns. We commend the courage of all journalists and media actors who, at great personal risk and sacrifice, continue to report the facts and bring Russia's human rights violations and abuses, as well as war crimes, to light.

The situation for journalists and media actors in Belarus is similarly dire. As of today, 25 of them remain imprisoned according to trustworthy sources in civil society. However, despite the risk of lengthy prison sentences and prolonged detentions, courageous independent media and individual journalists strive to inform their compatriots and the world about what is happening in Belarus. We stand with them and echo Ms. Ribeiro's call to free all journalists and other media actors who have been arbitrarily sentenced, arrested, or detained in Belarus.

Mr. Chairperson,

We call on all participating States to co-operate and to implement our OSCE commitments on media freedom and safety of journalists. We applaud those governments that have taken decisive steps to strengthen the protection of media freedom. We remain committed to promoting media freedom and to standing up against any efforts to undermine it.

Mr. Chairperson, I kindly request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372

5 May 2022

Annex 16

Original: ENGLISH

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 3(e)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE**

Mr. Chairperson,

Freedom of speech and free media have always constituted one of the main pillars of democratic and peaceful societies. Ukraine is committed to ensuring freedom of the media and in so doing to safeguarding the safety of journalists, countering propaganda and disinformation, and strengthening media literacy in society.

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the journalistic community has come together to speak with one voice against Russian propaganda.

Without the dedication and high professionalism of journalists covering the course of the Russian war, the world would not have known about the atrocities committed by Russia in Ukraine. Risking their lives in the besieged cities or under heavy bombardments and missile attacks, journalists in Ukraine are gathering information that is essential for safeguarding the truth and collecting facts about Russia's war crimes.

It is deeply regrettable that journalists and other media actors are among the victims of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In around two and a half months, the Russian invaders have killed more than twenty Ukrainian and foreign journalists. More than a hundred regional media outlets in the temporarily occupied territories have been forced to shut down owing to threats, destruction of newsrooms, and the impossibility of working under temporary occupation.

People in the areas under temporary control of the Russian troops are completely cut off from knowledge of the real state of play, which is one of Russia's main goals in its attempts to impose propaganda and spread its distorted presentation of the facts. The consequences of such propaganda can be clearly seen in Russia, where State-controlled media are deceiving Russian society by calling the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine a "special military operation" in order to justify it.

We are grateful to all our international partners who are contributing to combating Russian propaganda and disinformation by such measures as prohibiting Russian propaganda outlets from broadcasting on their territories.

We value the committed activity of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, including her powerful statements condemning Russian war and its impact on journalists carrying out their important work under unprecedented circumstances, and calling upon the aggressor State to refrain from propaganda for the purposes of war and national hatred.

Ukraine stands for the strengthening of freedom of the media, which makes a valuable contribution to democracy, peace and joint security in the whole OSCE area.

I kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1372  
5 May 2022  
Annex 17

Original: ENGLISH

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**1372nd Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1372, Agenda item 3(e)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We join other delegations in celebrating World Press Freedom Day, which creates an opportunity for participating States to evaluate the situation of freedom of media across the OSCE area.

No country is immune from the challenges in this field.

Since there were references to my country in the statement made on behalf of the European Union, I would like to state that we have taken note of the remarks and will convey them to our capital.

Mr. Chairperson,

Freedom of expression and media is guaranteed by our Constitution and relevant legislation. We have a very vibrant, dynamic and pluralistic society. This is reflected also in the media landscape. There are numerous media outlets addressing different segments of the society and defending different political, economic and social opinions.

Globally mounting security threats and terrorism in particular pose new challenges for our societies regarding freedom of expression. Today, many democracies face similar problems. In this context, our priority is to strike a proper balance between maintaining public order and security and protecting freedom of expression and the media.

The individual cases referred to by the distinguished European Union delegation are examined by independent and impartial courts. The courts issue their rulings on the basis of the merits of each case. Domestic remedies are available, including the right of appeal and individual application before the Constitutional Court. Hence, on this occasion I would like to express one more time that it is important to refrain from statements which may be construed as attempts to influence the judicial process.

I would also like to underline that we have a good and unabated co-operation with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro. We are determined to continue this fruitful dialogue and co-operation with her.

I kindly ask, Mr. Chairperson, for my statement to be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.