



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement in Response to Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria
H.E. Sebastian Kurz

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1108th meeting of the Permanent Council,
14 July 2016

Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine has aligned itself with the statement, made by the European Union, which we fully support. I will now make some additional remarks in the national capacity.

We join other speakers in warmly welcoming at the Permanent Council the incoming OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Federal Minister Sebastian Kurz and thank him for outlining the priorities of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship of 2017. Just like last July, when we addressed the present Chairman-in-Office, we again need to place emphasis on the ongoing deepest crisis in the European security since the end of the Cold war. The crisis resulted from Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and flagrant violation of the OSCE fundamental principles and commitments. This crisis is now aggravated by additional security challenges. The cornerstone of security in the OSCE space – the Helsinki Decalogue of principles, which underpins the respect to sovereignty and inviolability of borders of the participating States – has been undermined and endangered by the Russian Federation producing security uncertainty for Europe and beyond.

It is therefore essential that the incoming Austrian Chairmanship places the issue of respect to the OSCE core principles and commitments as its key priority in office and focuses on seeking correction of violations and their full implementation. We view this task as indispensable in terms of ensuring the OSCE relevance and credibility as a regional security actor.

We note and welcome the Chairmanship's determination to promote dialogue as a way to revamp the European security. To make it a result-oriented effort we are convinced that the dialogue should be honest, principled and based on zero-tolerance towards the root causes of the current security crisis, notably armed aggression of one OSCE participating State against another and breach of the international norms and principles.

Mr. Minister,

The term “crisis in and around Ukraine” was coined in the OSCE days after the Russian military forces illegally occupied the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. Later Russia attempted annexation of this part of Ukraine’s territory and sent its hybrid forces to another part of Ukraine – the Donbas. The conflict instigated by Russia will not be resolved until Russia de-occupies not only Donbas but also the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which are an integral part of Ukraine.

Mr. Minister,

Ukraine is committed to peaceful resolution of the conflict on the basis of the Minsk agreements and with full respect to its sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We have invested significant efforts in implementing the Minsk agreements, on both security and political tracks.

Unfortunately, our good-faith steps on implementation track have not been reciprocated by Russia and its proxies, which continue to violate the ceasefire by extensively using heavy weapons. Russia consolidates its military grip in the occupied part of Donbas, sending military personnel and weaponry to the illegal armed formations through uncontrolled border with Ukraine and placing these formations under a single chain of command with its own forces. The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, the release of hostages and illegally detained persons has been blocked. The SMM faces systematic restrictions of access in the occupied areas of Donbas.

Ukraine consistently supports the efforts of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Trilateral Contact Group aimed at facilitating implementation of the Minsk agreements. We appreciate Austria’s contribution to strengthening the SMM’s operational capabilities, including in terms of training of the monitors. Ukrainian side has established a good working cooperation with Ambassador Sajdik, an experienced Austrian diplomat representing the OSCE in the TCG.

Over the past two months we have observed deliberate attacks of combined Russian-separatist forces against the SMM and its equipment, aimed at “blinding” the OSCE monitoring. It is an important task both for the current and incoming Chairmanships to maintain the monitoring capabilities of the SMM on the level, sufficient to credibly perform the mandated functions.

The developments on the ground, the recognition of the need for political solution of the conflict testify that the international toolbox, assigned to respond to the conflict in Donbas, requires qualitative improvement to match the security needs. We consider an armed police mission, deployed throughout the conflict-affected area, in particular, on the state border, can address the needs for establishing a safe and secure environment, which is critically important in terms of progress on political track of the Minsk agreements. We hope for progress in practical implementation of this initiative and expect that the incoming Chairmanship will have it high on its agenda.

Mr.Minister,

Ukraine will support the Austrian Chairmanship in its endeavours to ensure common responses to terrorism, radicalization, organized crime and human trafficking, as well as to continue dialogue on arms control and CSBMs. It is important for my country, suffering from exported terrorist activities, to focus on border security, including by countering the phenomena of foreign terrorist fighters and other non-state actors.

The incoming Chairmanship can rely on Ukraine's support in the economic and environmental dimension. The issues, related to good governance and combating corruption deserve continued focused attention. Environmental implications of armed conflicts should also be part of our discussions in the second dimension.

Our work in the third dimension should attach priority to addressing the grave human rights violations committed by the occupying authorities in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and in the occupied areas of Donbas. It is of paramount importance to seek permanent international monitoring and reporting on the human rights' situation in the affected regions. The role of the OSCE Institutions is essential in this context and we encourage the incoming Austrian Chairmanship to provide every support to their efforts.

We expect that such thematic issues as protection of human rights in the situations of occupation, freedom from state propaganda, eradicating the phenomenon of political prisoners, ensuring right to a fair trial, combating torture and enforced disappearance, rights of IDPs and refugees will be duly reflected in the OSCE human dimension agenda for 2017.

I will conclude by expressing assurance of Ukraine's readiness for close and constructive cooperation with the incoming Austrian OSCE Chairmanship. We encourage the incoming Chairmanship to play a leading role in safeguarding the OSCE principles and commitments and restoring respect to them as a crucial prerequisite for peaceful, safe and secure OSCE region.

Thank you, Mr.Chairman.