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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY
Concerning the situation in Ukraine
(986th (Special) Meeting of the Permanent Council, 3 March 2014)**

Thank you Madam Chairperson.

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to the Swiss Chairmanship for convening this Special Meeting of the Permanent Council, as well as to Ambassador Guldemann and to my esteemed Ukrainian colleague for providing us with information regarding the developments in Ukraine.

We are deeply concerned about the risk of escalation the ongoing crisis in Ukraine entails. We believe that all sides should act with restraint, respect the principles of international law and OSCE commitments as well as bilateral and multilateral agreements, refraining from taking steps which could jeopardize public order and security in the country as a whole. I wish to particularly emphasize that the principle of non-violability of borders should be strictly adhered to at all times.

Ukraine is Turkey's neighbor and strategic partner. Restoring internal peace and political stability in Ukraine is of crucial importance for the entire region. It is essential that any solution to the current crisis be based on preserving the territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence and political unity of Ukraine.

Within this framework, we support the democratic process in Ukraine and it is our expectation that all stakeholders would arrive at a common understanding regarding the future course that Ukraine will take through an all-inclusive effort. We deem it of particular importance that such inclusivity also be reflected in the composition and activities of the newly formed interim government representing all political groups and views in Ukraine that respect the constitutional framework.

Turkey will continue her close political dialogue with all stakeholders to help ease the tensions. Within this framework, Minister Davutoğlu visited Ukraine last Saturday. During this visit he highlighted the points I alluded to earlier relating to Turkey's stance, and at the same time underlined that the peaceful coexistence of all ethnic and religious groups as Ukrainian citizens with equal rights in Crimea is essential for the prosperity of the peninsula, for the welfare of Ukraine as a whole and for overall peace in the Black Sea region.

Madam Chairperson,

Looking at the crisis from different angles, we observe that the OSCE has distinct advantages in offering and lending support and ideas to the restoration of peace and calm. From a minorities' perspective, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities may make significant contributions. Let us not forget that, on the Crimean peninsula, there are a number of minorities. Turkey has always closely followed the situation of the Crimean Tatars and we hope that their well-being is ensured with their homeland remaining within Ukraine. We therefore find the High Commissioner's upcoming visit very timely.

As I already mentioned in yesterday's Preparatory Committee meeting, we have a toolbox to offer to participating States with a variety of mechanisms and instruments devised to be used in times and situations like the one currently at hand. We need to encourage all sides to make the best use of this toolbox. The two Participating States involved need to re-engage immediately in an effective political dialogue.

I would like to voice our support to the idea of creating an International Contact Group that would serve as a Coordination Platform providing an effective dialogue among all stakeholders, supporting the democratic process in Ukraine in an inclusive manner responding to the legitimate aspirations of the people. This Group could certainly be instrumental in mobilizing efforts to assist Ukraine in addressing the pressing challenges that she faces.

On the other hand, we must discuss and swiftly decide upon all measures that are available to us to help resolve the matter in a peaceful fashion, including a mission as brought to the fore by my distinguished Canadian colleague.

As I said yesterday, if we cannot effectively address such crises and unacceptable situations, particularly at a time when we are engaged in the Helsinki +40 process and speaking of strengthening a security community, we put at risk the credibility and viability of not only the vision we are framing for the future of the OSCE, but the Organization's past achievements as well. All of us have a stake and bear responsibility in this critical matter.

Thank you.