



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
AT THE 999th FSC PLENARY MEETING
(2 February 2022)**

Agenda item 1, Security Dialogue: Mine action with the focus on the UNSCR 2365

Mr Chairperson,

Ukraine has aligned with the EU statement. Let me also make some remarks in my national capacity.

The Delegation of Ukraine is grateful to the FSC Chairpersonship of Azerbaijan for dedicating this Security Dialogue to the extremely important topic of Mine Action and the United Nation Security Council Resolution 2365. We welcome today's keynote speakers and thank them for their contributions to our discussions on this topical subject.

The OSCE has provided a useful platform to support the participating States in addressing issues pertaining to Mine Action and efforts of participating States to address threat posed by the so-called "silent killers". Landmines, remnants of war and improvised explosive devices continue to aggravate humanitarian situation in the conflict zones around the OSCE area. Every day millions of people risk their lives to access schools, hospitals and markets.

Demining is of extremely critical importance for my country. The war waged by Russia in 2014 has resulted in turning Ukraine into one of the most heavily mine-affected countries in the world.

As a result of Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict, a large area of Donetsk and Luhansk regions is contaminated with explosives. Only according to preliminary estimates, the area that is considered mine-hazardous is: in the Government-controlled areas - about 7,000 sq.km, in the temporarily occupied areas - about 14,000 sq.km (covering the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions as well as in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol).

Unexploded mines and shells, booby traps and improvised explosive devices pose the greatest potential danger to the civilian population. They caused about 30% of the victims out of the total number of deaths and injuries.

It is a matter of our particular concern, that the Russian Federation continues to supply its occupation forces with anti-personnel landmines, prohibited by International Humanitarian Law. The Russian occupation forces continued to contaminate Ukrainian soil with mines of different types. These mines are planted both remotely and by subversive groups on roads, pathways, and areas in close vicinity to residential areas and pose significant threat to civilians. Since 27 July 2020 there are 58 cases registered of remote planting of mines. 257 mines planted by the Russian occupation forces in Donbas during these cases include PMN-2 and POM-2 anti-personnel mines. These mines are prohibited for the use under the Ottawa Convention, however they are in the operational service with the Russian Armed Forces.

Adopting resolution 2365, the UN Security Council called “on all parties to conflict to end immediately and definitively any indiscriminate use of explosive devices in violation of international humanitarian law”. We are extremely concerned that despite being a permanent member of the UN Security Council and voting in favour of this resolution, the Russian Federation continues to ignore its provisions as well as numerous other norms and principles of international law. This situation is another example of how Russian deeds do not match its words. We call on the Russian Federation to abide by their international obligations related to mine action.

Mr Chairperson,

In order to ensure the appropriate level of civil protection, the Ukrainian government pursues broad efforts to reduce risks related to mines. The State Emergency Service, Special Transportation Service and the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine in close cooperation with international partners address the issue through practical measures on decontamination and destruction of mines and explosive devices in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In 2021, Ukrainian Mine Action specialists checked 2,253 hectares of territory, 495 kilometres of roads and railways, discovered and destroyed 57,625 explosive items in the Government-controlled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

In line with the UNSC Resolution 2365, Ukrainian authorities pay special attention to mine risk education activities. To this end, local radio, press, television, the Internet are extensively used, community outreach seminars are held, thematic posters and leaflets are distributed. In 2021 alone, over 33,702 civilians in Donetsk and Luhansk regions participated in these activities. Besides, an interactive map of areas contaminated with mines and explosives was developed and posted on the official website of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine.

It is clear that comprehensive humanitarian demining would be possible only after the end of hostilities. It is high time for the Russian Federation to stop its aggression

against Ukraine and to engage itself in the negotiations. We remain fully committed to the peaceful settlement and expect the same from the Russian side.

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to reiterate that Mine Action and protection of civilians in the conflict zone is a top priority for the Government of Ukraine. We are making and will make every effort to ensure appropriate quality of Mine Action in Ukraine, for every mine that is discovered, every explosive ordnance disposed of – are human lives saved.

In these challenging times, the OSCE assistance mechanism proves indispensable to help promote effective implementation of commitments related to Mine Action.

I would like to commend the OSCE activities in Ukraine in this domain, notably the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine (PCU) Ambassador Henrik Villadsen. The PCU assistance made a tangible contribution to the development of national demining system. Together with the State Emergency Service, Ministry of Defence, and Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, the PCU has been carrying out the “Building Ukrainian Humanitarian Mine Action Capacity” project. We consider this project most beneficial for developing an effective national demining system and swift implementation by Ukraine of the international mine action standards.

We also are grateful to the respective non-governmental organisations, in particular the Halo Trust, Danish Refugee Council and Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, for their contribution to the mine clearance of conflict-affected areas in Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The Government of Ukraine looks forward to further fruitful cooperation with the OSCE PCU and our international partners in this field for the sake of safety and security of people in Ukraine.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.