



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement in response to the Report of H.E. Lamberto Zannier,
OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities**

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1199th meeting of the Permanent Council,
1 November 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes H.E. Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for the presented report.

We wish to reiterate our strong support for the mandate and activities of the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Ukraine stays committed to protecting and promoting the rights of national minorities in Ukraine in line with its national legislation, the OSCE commitments and international standards. We appreciate our co-operation with the HCNM and the High Commissioner's engagement with the Ukrainian authorities to assist the comprehensive transformation process in the country, including in the field of education. We note positive evaluation of a number of practical steps taken by the Government of Ukraine to meet the recommendations of the Venice Commission of December 2017. The authorities of Ukraine will continue to aim at their implementation. At the same time, we encourage the High Commissioner to pay a closer attention to the attempts or policies of obstruction or placing obstacles to pursuit of the legitimate goals of the Ukrainian authorities to enhance integration and cohesion of the society across the country. Ukraine is determined to provide for full enjoyment of rights and realization of potential of all citizens of Ukraine regardless of their ethnic origin.

Dear High Commissioner,

As regularly highlighted in this hall, the most glaring violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms take place in parts of Ukraine illegally occupied by the Russian Federation. Your visit to the southern parts of Ukraine in September 2018, in particular to Kherson region and Chongar administrative border crossing, gave you the chance to receive more firsthand information about human rights

violations and discrimination faced by the Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians in the temporarily occupied Crimean peninsula.

As widely acknowledged by international human rights observers, the Russian occupying authorities have denied various manifestations of Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar culture and identity by groups perceived as hostile to the Russian Federation and the attempted annexation of Crimea.

According to the most recent report by the UNESCO, Russia continues “to exert pressure on ethnic and religious communities that refuse to recognize the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and seek to preserve their native language, religious and cultural identity.” They have become victims of illegal searches, interrogations, detention and forced disappearances as a part of campaign of intimidation and persecution.

Brutal attacks unleashed by the occupying authorities to annihilate the Mejlis, historic representative body of the Crimean Tatar people, to silence its leaders and members continue unabated in brazen defiance of the Order of the International Court of Justice of the 19 April 2017 which called for lifting the ban on activities of the Mejlis.

Ethnic Ukrainians have also become the victims of severe discrimination and political persecution, especially when they express pro-Ukrainian views or manifest their Ukrainian identity (speaking in the Ukrainian language, celebrating Ukrainian holidays, or wearing symbols of Ukraine). The Russian occupying authorities spare no effort to cleanse the Ukrainian identity from the cultural landscape of the peninsula.

The Order of the International Court of Justice demanding Russia as an occupying power “to ensure the availability of education in the Ukrainian language” remains ignored by the Russian authorities.

In these dire circumstances Ukraine reiterates its call to the OSCE HCNM as well as ODIHR to use all assets at their disposal and closely monitor the situation, in particular the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2015 HRAM Report on Crimea. We also encourage to increase effectiveness of interaction with the United Nations to contribute to implementation of UNGA Resolutions 71/205 and 72/190, both titled “Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)”. It remains crucial to continue seeking access to the peninsula in compliance with Ukraine’s legislation and the UNGA Resolution 68/262 “Territorial integrity of Ukraine”.

Dear High Commissioner,

Your most recent trip to Moscow makes us recall that with over 2 mln strong Ukrainian national minority in Russia, according to official statistics, there is not a single school there with the full curriculum of instruction in the Ukrainian language. Last year a single Library of Ukrainian Literature in Russia, which had functioned in Moscow, was liquidated. Over 70 Ukrainian citizens have been made political prisoners of the Russian regime on fabricated charges which delivered a chilling effect to the Ukrainian ethnic minority in Russia and its cultural manifestations.

The High Commissioner is informed that the new federal law “On Education in the Russian Federation”, adopted in late July and signed into law in August 2018, caused considerable resentment in many regions of the country drawing allusions to Stalin’s repressions against national minorities. We wish to ask the High Commissioner whether he provided his opinion to the Russian authorities on this federal law and, if so, what reaction followed. We also wish to ask the High Commissioner whether after the recent trip to Moscow he plans to visit Russian regions, in particular the constituent entities, to examine the situation for ethnic minorities and facilitate inter-ethnic dialogue.

We encourage the High Commissioner to beware and effectively resist Moscow’s attempts to instrumentalise the Institution for the purposes of promoting Russia’s neo-imperial concept of the “Russian world”, which includes so called “Russian speakers” as its important element.

Distinguished colleagues,

We support the thematic work by the HCNM aimed at promoting the HCNM’s recommendations and guidelines in order to expand the scope for their practical application. We welcome the successful conduct of the conference on the 10th anniversary of the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendation in July 2018 and encourage to conduct regional events to promote this very important set of recommendations.

We believe that endorsement of the HCNM Recommendations within the OSCE will help to affirm political will to avoid situations when interest of kin-States to support their national minorities in neighboring states “collides with the jurisdiction of the latter, interfering in integration processes”.

Mr. Chairperson,

I will conclude by again thanking the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Ambassador Lamberto Zannier for today’s report. We congratulate him, his team and all participating States on the upcoming 25th anniversary of the establishment of the office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, which we will be marked next week.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.