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Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement in Response to the address by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office,
the Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Austria Sebastian Kurz**

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk
to the 1127th special meeting of the Permanent Council,
12 January 2017

Mr. Chairman,

We warmly welcome to the Permanent Council the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Austria's Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz and thank him for the comprehensive presentation of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship priorities for 2017. We commend your personal determination, Minister Kurz, to contribute to the activities of the OSCE aiming at defusing existing conflicts and fighting radicalization and violent extremism.

Re-establishing trust will remain a formidable task for all of us amidst the ongoing flagrant breach of the OSCE core principles and commitments by the Russian Federation. Nearly three years ago the foundation of the European security was shattered by Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, illegal occupation of Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as its further military intervention and hybrid warfare in Donbas. The day when Russian regular forces violated Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by moving to take control of the governmental buildings and legitimate bodies of power in Crimea was a day when the entire European security order was placed into grave danger, giving rise to the worst security crisis since the end of the Cold war with Russia positioning itself as a clear threat to security.

We are deeply convinced that security on the European continent cannot and will not be restored by closing the eyes to the use of force to change borders or appeasing the aggressor. The restoration of security must take place on the basis of the OSCE fundamental principles, but not through revising them. It is not the norms and principles which are at fault, but the country which flouts them. Any attempt to compromise on the agreed norms and principles can only generate more instability. We therefore look forward that in the course of the year the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship will serve the interests of peace and security and of the OSCE participating States by acting as a dedicated guardian of the OSCE principles and commitments and promoting their full

implementation, including as regards restoration of Russia's respect to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

We highly appreciate, Minister Kurz, your personal commitment to facilitating the peaceful resolution of the crisis in and around Ukraine, which was so clearly demonstrated by your working visit to Donbas immediately in the first days of the year, on 3-4 January 2017. You had the opportunity to witness first-hand some of the consequences of the Russian aggression. The conflict which had been masterminded in Moscow and then instigated and fuelled in the Donbas region of Ukraine, resulted till now in tens of thousands of killed and wounded among servicemen and civilians, nearly 1,7 million internally displaced persons, human sufferings and massive destruction of infrastructure and economy of the affected regions.

Ukraine is dedicated to peaceful resolution of the conflict in the firm belief that implementation of the Minsk agreements in their entirety is the roadmap for restoring peace in Donbas with full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It remains a matter of deep concern that after over two years, despite all the efforts undertaken by Ukraine and our international partners, even the initial security provisions of those agreements, first and foremost the immediate and comprehensive ceasefire, were not fulfilled by Russia and its proxies in Donbas. The Russian Federation continues to maintain a constant supply of manpower, weapons and ammunition to kill Ukrainians in their land. A small glimpse on the amount of lethal power brought by Russia to advance its intervention into Donbas is provided in the SMM report of 6 January: in Luhansk oblast near Miusynsk the SMM observed 238 pieces of equipment and weaponry, nearly 60 more than observed in July, among them 48 multiple-launch rocket systems in violation of withdrawal lines, 11 tanks and 18 howitzers; near Buhaivka – 21 howitzers in violation of withdrawal lines and 33 tanks; in Donetsk oblast at a compound near Manuilivka – about 55 tanks. This is the amount of Russian weaponry – 347 pieces - at only three locations in the occupied areas of Donbas!

The latest OSCE SMM reports reveal unabated use of heavy weapons by the combined Russian separatist forces despite the Christmas season arrangement on cease-fire from 24 December 2016 reached by the Trilateral Contact Group. These shellings lead to the mounting loss of life and casualties. In the last 24 hours one Ukrainian serviceman was killed and 5 were wounded. Yesterday the shells of the combined Russian-separatist forces landed near Avdiivka coke plant and cut the power supply to the Donetsk water filtration station.

It remains critically important to promote implementation of security provisions as a basic requirement for progress on other aspects of the Minsk agreements and we count on the Chairmanship's consistent efforts in this regard. We encourage the Chairmanship's efforts in reinforcing the operations and capabilities of the OSCE SMM in the conflict affected area of Ukraine and taking forward the discussions on the possible OSCE Armed Police Mission. Such Mission would aim at providing security

before, during and after local elections in Donbas as a key element of political settlement of the conflict, which can be reached only after all the necessary security prerequisites are fulfilled. Long overdue is the permanent monitoring and verification by the OSCE at the uncontrolled sections of the Ukrainian-Russian state border and establishment of a security zone in border areas of Ukraine and Russia as stipulated by a specific provision of the Minsk agreements. We hope for the Chairmanship's decisive contribution to implementing this provision.

In the humanitarian field, persistence and continuous resolve of the Chairmanship and the OSCE community are needed to secure immediate release of Ukrainian citizens who are held as hostages in illegal detention in Donbas and Crimea as well on the territory of the Russian Federation. The detailed information on Ukrainian citizens illegally detained in Russia, including Oleg Sentsov, Olexander Kolchenko and others, was circulated by Ukraine to all delegations on 5 January. We also hope that it will be possible to do more to alleviate the plight of the people living in the occupied areas.

Mr. Chairperson,

We would recall that the term "crisis in and around Ukraine" emerged in the OSCE when the Russian military invaded Ukraine in the Crimean peninsula. The resolution of the crisis requires de-occupation by Russia of both Donbas and Crimea and restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We encourage the OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Institutions to use all assets at their disposal to monitor, report and duly react to the human rights situation in the occupied Crimea, which is marked by repressions, political persecution and serious human rights violations.

Mr. Chairperson,

On the broader Chairmanship's programme, we note with satisfaction that it reflects a number of Ukraine's priorities.

We will support efforts of taking forward the dialogue, structured and based on realities, on conventional arms control as a means to inject more confidence and diffuse escalation. We expect continuous attention to modernizing the OSCE confidence and security measures. Developing an incident prevention and response mechanism in military sphere could be a significant positive move in the current uncertain security environment.

We look forward to building up on the work done last year in relation to the OSCE capabilities and effectiveness in the conflict cycle. The OSCE conflict-relating toolbox needs to be adjusted and strengthened to duly respond in case of inter-state conflict and aggression.

Greatly concerned by the rise of international terrorist threats and as a country suffering from terrorism and terrorist groups, we are interested in sustained focus on the practical implementation of Counter-Terrorism Declaration adopted in Hamburg.

Strengthening border security, including by countering the phenomena of foreign terrorist fighters and other non-state actors, should be part and parcel of our counter-terrorism efforts.

Ukraine will strongly support the work in the implementation of existing cyber CBMs and exploring additional ones, including with consideration of their extension to other OSCE dimensions.

Within the second dimension, good governance, combating corruption and money laundering, energy security, environmental implications of armed conflicts will remain Ukraine's priorities. We see particular relevance in addressing economic renewal of Donbas and rehabilitation of conflict-affected territories. The issues relating to economic co-operation between states must be grounded in full and good faith implementation of all OSCE principles and commitments, starting from the Helsinki Final Act. Presently, when the concept of collective security is flagrantly breached by aggression of one participating State against another, the contemplation of the topic, or rather vision, of "common economic space" appears to be far premature.

We welcome the Austrian Chairmanship's determination to promote enhanced implementation of commitments in the human dimension, including in such areas as freedom of assembly and association, freedom of media and expression, freedom of religion or belief, tolerance and non-discrimination. It is extremely important to make sure that the situations of occupation do not become "exclusion zones" concerning observance of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. Strengthened co-operation with the civil society needs to be an integral part of these efforts.

We expect that such thematic issues as countering state propaganda, eradicating the phenomenon of political prisoners, combating torture and enforced disappearances, ensuring the rights of IDPs and refugees will be duly reflected in the human dimension agenda for 2017.

Mr. Chairperson,

We will conclude by emphasizing that all efforts of the Austrian Chairmanship aimed at restoring respect for the OSCE principles and commitments will be actively supported by Ukraine. We wish the Chairperson-in-Office and the Chairmanship's team every success in their activities and look forward to our close cooperation in the course of the year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.