



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Right of Reply to the current issue raised by the Russian delegation

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1306th meeting of the Permanent Council
18 March 2021

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to exercise our right of reply to the current issue, raised today by the Russian delegation under the propaganda title, which I do not want even to quote.

The futility of attempts by the Russian side to impose its own perverted vision of the developments in Crimea in the last seven years is obvious. Having, again, failed to persuade participating States at the meeting of the Permanent Council two weeks ago, the Russian delegation has introduced today a current issue under the same title.

“Potemkin villages”, presented by the Russian delegation, would not deceive anyone. It remains easy to build them, when any international monitoring presence, including by the OSCE SMM, continues to be denied by the Russian occupation authorities.

In our statement two weeks ago, we have already stressed that a staged show of 16 March 2014 called by the occupiers as so-called “referendum”, was held at the Russian gunpoint, having no legal implications. It took place in a direct contradiction to the Constitution and legislation of Ukraine, flagrant violation of the norms of international law, as well as international obligations by Russia under bilateral and multilateral agreements.

The fact of establishing effective control over Crimea by the Russian Federation since 27 February 2014 was recognized by the recent decision of the European Court of Human Rights. All subsequent events in the peninsula were held already under the Russian occupation.

This was recognized by the international community, which imposed its restrictive measures against Russia and continues to support Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. Let me quote in this regard the G7 Foreign Ministers’ Statement on Ukraine, published today morning: “The UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter clearly state the fundamental principles of respect for the territorial integrity of any State and the prohibition of any use of force to change borders. By its use of force against the territorial integrity of Ukraine, Russia has clearly violated international law and contravened these principles”, end of quote.

The ongoing occupation and militarization of Crimea by Russia, as well known to participating States, remains a growing security challenge for a wider region well beyond the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

Deoccupation of Crimea with peaceful politico-diplomatic means remains a top-priority for Ukraine. It is for this purpose that the “Crimea platform” initiative was launched, on which we have already informed participating States. We reiterate our call to join it.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.