



**Delegation of Ukraine  
to the OSCE**

PC.DEL/1040/08  
28 November 2008

ENGLISH only

**Statement in response to**

**the High Commissioner on National Minorities Ambassador K.Vollebaek**

As for delivery by Ambassador Yelchenko at the 742<sup>nd</sup> Permanent Council  
27 November 2008

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Ukraine joins others in welcoming High Commissioner Ambassador Vollebaek to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive and thought provoking report. The fact that delegations have made so many comments on the High Commissioner's report proves the value and importance of his work.

Let me also express gratitude for the warm welcome extended by the HCNM and by the Dutch Government to those of us who attended the events commemorating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the institution of the HCNM in the Hague. Following the order of subjects raised by the High Commissioner in his report, I would like to reaffirm that Ukraine attaches great importance to the HCNM mandate, which has become even more relevant in light of the recent developments in the international political arena involving national minority issues.

Ukraine is grateful to the High Commissioner for developing recommendations on national minorities in inter-State relations. The recommendations properly address a number of significant issues concerning states' responsibilities both for protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities under their jurisdiction and for acting as responsible members of the international community with respect to minorities under the jurisdiction of another State. We particularly welcome the clear reference in the Recommendations to the principle of proportionality in the promotion by States of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, who live abroad and within their own borders.

We believe that the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities as a key OSCE instrument of conflict prevention and early warning has an increasingly important role to play in assisting participating States in the implementation of these Recommendations, taking into account the peculiarities of minority issues in each country. In our view, quiet and effective early action on the part of the High Commissioner as well as an open and honest dialogue with participating States on the existing problems involving national minorities is very important in that regard.

It is our hope that the participating States will carefully study and implement in good faith the Recommendations, which provide a normative and practical guidance fully in line with the relevant international standards and principles of international law, with a view to contributing to a more secure and stable Europe.

As the report mentions the High Commissioner's visit to Ukraine, I would like to commend Ambassador Vollebaek's participation in a number of events, held in Ukraine, including in the conference organized jointly with the Ministry of the Interior of Ukraine and in the round table on the Transdnistrian settlement.

I wish to confirm that the discussions with various interlocutors in Ukraine concerning minority-related issues were held in a frank and constructive atmosphere. I would like to assure the High Commissioner that the recommendations he has made will remain a subject of careful consideration by the relevant Ukrainian authorities. We also expect that the High Commissioner, on his part, will continue addressing minority-related issues, which he raised with the Ukrainian side during his latest visit to Ukraine, taking into account the provisions of the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations.

Let me conclude by saying that Ukraine would welcome the continued involvement of the High Commissioner's Office in the Ukrainian-Romanian joint monitoring mission in the sphere of minority protection, with a view to bringing it to a successful conclusion. We also support the recent initiative of the High Commissioner to address specific minority issues in Ukraine's bilateral relations with another participating State.

The Delegation of Ukraine wishes you all the best in your challenging work ahead.