



STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY
Concerning the situation in Ukraine
(988th Special Meeting of the Permanent Council, 7 March 2014)

Thank you Madam Chairperson.

I would like to begin by thanking the Chairmanship-in-Office for convening the Permanent Council today, enabling us to once again exchange views on the situation in Ukraine. As I stated during yesterday's Council meeting, this provides us with a good means of engaging and having a proper sense of political dialogue. It is a practice we should maintain.

We have already made use of numerous occasions to stress the cornerstones of our position: contributing to a peaceful political solution through dialogue respectful of the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in line with the norms and principles of international law and with OSCE commitments.

Moreover, in all our contacts on this issue, we have also been drawing attention to the special sensitivity Turkey has always harbored for Crimea also in light of the Tatar minority in the Peninsula.

Ukraine, the Russian Federation and other delegations voice serious concerns over the realities on the ground. Yet, their versions about what is happening are in stark contrast. It is essential to objectively establish the facts. It will serve de-escalation and help build confidence.

There are two important avenues to utilize to this end: the Russian Federation and Ukraine to enter into a meaningful dialogue and constructive engagement is the first. Second is the need for us to speedily agree on the documents establishing and breathing life into a Monitoring Mission, and dispatching it without delay. This will have multiple benefits both with regard to progressing towards a solution, and for the standing and credibility of our Organization.

On the other hand, it is equally important to refrain from any moves that could further aggravate the already delicate and tense situation.

The decision adopted by the Parliament of the Crimean Autonomous Republic to hold a referendum on Crimea's status is one such negative move. I have examined the text of yesterday's press release by the High Commissioner on National Minorities. She is concerned about the precarious situation in Crimea. She says, and I quote: "Rash decisions on the future status of Crimea are a major source of tension and expose divisions between the peninsula's communities that have been left unaddressed for decades." She goes on to say, and I quote once again: "Crimean Tatars have taken a different position to the majority population, which

increases their vulnerability. Relations between ethnic groups on the peninsula are characterized by a growing climate of fear.”

In light of all these elements, as well as our particular sensitivity towards the Crimean Tatars that I just referred to, the decision is a source of concern also for us.

As such, it has also prompted the Turkish Foreign Ministry to issue a statement. The statement expresses that the decision of the Parliament of the Crimean Autonomous Republic will not contribute to the efforts aiming to solve the crisis in Ukraine; that we evaluate the decision as a dangerous and erroneous move that could cause serious fault lines among different ethnic groups in Crimea and have adverse consequences throughout the region and beyond, reminding all once again that the crisis may not be solved through faits accomplis.

Madam Chairperson,

We believe it is high time that serious and meaningful engagement and constructive dialogue aiming at finding a solution that could accommodate the concerns of all stakeholders dominate the overarching approach to the crisis.

We have heard what my esteemed Russian colleague said concerning the ongoing negotiations at high levels. I respect that. However, in the meantime we as an organization have the responsibility to take things seriously and do what we can. Whatever we do here will not prejudice or preempt any of the efforts being pursued at higher levels. On our part we must demonstrate that the OSCE is capable of action.

Thank you.