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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1242nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 October 2019

**On the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements**

Mr. Chairperson,

Some progress has been made in the process of resolving the crisis in Ukraine. At the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) in Minsk on 1 October, representatives of the Ukrainian Government and of the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk agreed on a mechanism for establishing the special status of Donbas according to the “Steinmeier formula” and indicated their readiness to resume the disengagement of forces and hardware in Zolote and Petrivske from 7 October. This progress was made possible thanks to the impetus given in recent weeks to the TCG by the “Normandy format”.

The simultaneous progress in resolving these closely intertwined political and security issues enables the dialogue to get moving on key aspects of a settlement. We note in that connection the position voiced by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Miroslav Lajčák, during his visit to Kyiv on 14 September. He stressed that the “Steinmeier formula” is “a good basis for implementing the Minsk agreements”.

As things stand, the ball is largely in the Ukrainian Government’s court, for it will have to incorporate the “Steinmeier formula” into Ukraine’s legislation. At the same time, it is important to understand that all the necessary amendments connected with the granting of special status to Donbas on a permanent basis are more than just reaching an agreement on the text of the “Steinmeier formula” in the TCG. It is also necessary to ensure that all aspects of providing a legislative framework for the special status of Donbas are discussed and agreed upon within the TCG with the representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The work in the TCG, where the Ukrainian Government and the representatives of Donbas have every opportunity for direct dialogue, needs to be stepped up as much as possible now. We expect practical steps that would contribute to an increase in the current momentum.

At the same time, conflicting political signals have been coming from the Ukrainian Government throughout September, and the situation at the line of contact in eastern Ukraine has remained unstable. Not so long ago, the Ukrainian authorities promised to engage in dialogue with the inhabitants of Donbas and resolve the crisis within six months. However, after contact with their Western “mentors”, in particular with the Special Representative of the United States of America for Ukraine, Kurt Volker, their rhetoric changed and lost its former constructive tone. I must emphasize that the attempts to keep the Ukrainian Government

in a confrontational position, to hinder a settlement and to “fuel” tension in Donbas are having a negative effect on the stability of the region.

One need only recall how the Ukrainian presidential adviser, Andriy Yermak, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vadym Prystaiko, first agreed with the text of the “Steinmeier formula” and then came up with conflicting arguments. It appeared that the Ukrainian Government had no intention of agreeing with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk on legislative changes to ensure a special status for Donbas. This directly contravenes Point 11 of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015. How will these ideas combine with the specific commitments under the agreements reached in the TCG on 1 October?

Nevertheless, given a favourable dynamic, the conditions will be created for preparing for a summit in the “Normandy format”. The prospects for holding such a summit meeting will become clear once the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) confirms the disengagement of forces and hardware in Petrivske and Zolote. I would remind you that, after their meetings in Paris (2015) and Berlin (2016), the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine reached an understanding regarding the need for the disengagement of forces and hardware in Stanytsia Luhanska, Petrivske and Zolote and also the formalization in writing in the TCG of the “Steinmeier formula”. It is the implementation of these instructions that paves the way for a new “Normandy Quartet” summit. If this does not happen, there is little point in having a meeting for the sake of it. The Ukrainian leadership should not try to use a “Normandy format” summit simply to resolve its domestic policy issues rather than to advance a settlement.

Unfortunately, the ceasefire regime in Donbas is still not being fully respected. From time to time, the shooting is brutal. We recall the horrendous shelling of certain areas of the Donetsk region on 6 September using 152 mm large-calibre artillery, which resulted in the hamlet of Roza and all the buildings there being practically wiped from the face of the earth (SMM report dated 11 September). Since the beginning of 2019, the number of casualties confirmed by the SMM among the civilian population has reached at least 115 people, 16 of whom were killed and 99 injured. Over the past four weeks, according to the Mission, ten civilians have been injured, one of whom died. The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Martin Sajdik, also spoke about special attention to civilian casualties in his press statement of 1 October. We once again strongly urge the Mission to collate the information it has and to issue a thematic report on civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure facilities.

Attempts by foreign countries to “beef up” Ukraine’s military capability and pump it full of weapons continue unabated. The country is essentially being dragged into reckless politico-military ventures under the guise of carrying out structural reforms in the defence sector. I am referring, for example, to the recent allocation by the United States of the latest funds for so-called military aid to Ukraine – this time worth 391.5 million US dollars. Furthermore, according to reports from the Bloomberg agency, Congress and the State Department have provisionally approved the sale to Ukraine of the next consignment of Javelin anti-tank missile systems worth 39 million US dollars.

The conduct of the “Rapid Trident-2019” Ukrainian-NATO military exercises, which took place in the second half of September in the Lviv region, is in a similar vein. In an environment that was as close to a combat situation as possible and in co-ordination with US, Canadian and British military personnel, the Ukrainian armed forces practised elements of offensive actions involving the conduct of operations to quickly clear a locality. As can be seen from video footage in the Ukrainian media, special forces units from eastern Ukraine (Sumy region) practised methods of suppressing by force the discontent of inhabitants of settlements that might be seized in the course of such an offensive operation. This is taking place against the backdrop of the plans announced by the newly appointed Ukrainian Minister of Defence, Andriy Zagorodniuk, of “first and foremost, building up combat units”, which he shared in an interview with

Radio Svoboda on 21 September. All this does not square well with the Ukrainian leadership's assurances that there will be no further bloodshed.

It seems that the essence of the so-called plan for the normalization of the situation in Donbas, much-touted by the Ukrainian Government, or the "Zelenskyi formula" (as the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vadym Prystaiko, called it) at this stage boils down to simply stating that there is some kind of new approach to a settlement. The content, however, still remains unclear. At the same time, the declared principle of reaching the hearts and minds of the people of Donbas who live on the other side of the line of contact can be successfully implemented only if there is fair and honest consideration of the views of these people. Attempts to impose pseudo-compromises on them against the backdrop of training for military scenarios are doomed to failure.

We urge the Ukrainian leadership to demonstrate the utmost responsibility in its assessments of what is happening in the east of the country and to use the chance available to achieve mutually acceptable solutions with Donbas. Finally, it is important not to squander the opportunities that have arisen following the presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine and also to consolidate the positive developments observed in the TCG. There can be no "Plan B" in the current circumstances. A political and diplomatic settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis through the full implementation of all the provisions of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015, endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202, on the basis of direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities of Donetsk and Luhansk is the only way forward.

Thank you for your attention.