

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1152nd MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 July 2017

**In response to the report by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have listened attentively to the report by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. The distinguished Ambassador Verba faces a difficult task against the background of an internal Ukrainian conflict that is now in its fourth year.

First, it is important to ensure that the projects take account of the legal rights and interests of all citizens in the country regardless of where they live, their nationality, language, cultural or religious affiliations. This also applies to those living in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Second, when planning and executing the programme activities, the Co-ordinator should pay attention that the projects do not conflict with, forestall or undermine the agreements reached in the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine. Third, duplication of the functions of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine should be avoided. And fourth, the work of the Office should aim at resolving the main problems within Ukraine, and the results should be concrete and presented to the participating States.

We note that in the last three years the Co-ordinator's work has undergone changes, and new programmes have been devised in an attempt to adapt to the present-day reality. One of them aims at promoting dialogue between the different groups in Ukrainian society. In this area, the Office has succeeded in holding a number of events enabling local officials and representatives of civil society living in the Government-controlled territory of Donbas to discuss various questions with the central authorities. Initial discussions have been undertaken with the participation of internally displaced and young persons. A study of these problems and their submission to the authorities in Kyiv is certainly important, but in terms of Ukraine as a whole, these discussion events cannot claim to be inclusive, if for no other reason than that they have not taken place in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and no mechanism has been developed for taking account of the opinions of the participants in round tables when carrying out reforms.

We have drawn attention to the organization in February of a conference on the safety of journalists. There is no doubt that this problem deserves the closest attention in Ukraine. We are all aware of the lack of progress in the investigation of the terrible murders of Oles Buzina, Igor Kornelyuk, Anton Voloshin, Anatoly Klyan, Andrea Rocchelli and others. The repression of journalists is continuing with the connivance of the authorities. I am sure we are all familiar with the Mirotvorets site. Freedom of speech is restricted in the country, and the language rights of national minorities are officially infringed. These are all problems demanding the most careful attention. We trust that the Project Co-ordinator will focus on them in his work to ensure the rights of journalists and will be able to share the concrete results of his work with the participating States.

We are closely following the demining and chemical safety programmes. Work in these sensitive areas should be structured with extreme care with account taken of the agreements reached in the Trilateral Contact Group.

We take the position that assistance should be given to victims of the conflict on both sides of the line of contact. It would be wrong to limit this work to providing psychological assistance to former members of the volunteer battalions and Ukrainian soldiers returning from the conflict zone.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Ambassador Verba and wish him every success.

Thank you for your attention.