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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
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AT THE 1120th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 November 2016

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The events in Ukraine are not encouraging. We see no signs that the Ukrainian security forces intend to move towards a reduction of tension in the conflict zone and eventually to a sustainable ceasefire. On the contrary, we are observing trainloads of military equipment arriving in Donbas. The reports by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) confirm the use of heavy artillery and multiple-launch rocket systems.

During the week of 14 to 20 November, according to the SMM, Ukrainian security forces shelled towns and villages in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions on 12 occasions. This resulted in damage to a hospital in Donetsk, a school in Oleksandrivka and a technical college in Dokushaievsk; houses were destroyed in Sakhanka, Kominternove, Styła, Raivka, Zhovte and Dzerzhynsk, and Bezimenne was also hit.

In his briefing to the delegations in Vienna on 18 November, the SMM's Principal Deputy Chief Monitor Alexander Hug announced that 76 civilians have been killed and 289 injured as a result of artillery shelling and exchanges of fire in Donbas in 2016. Most of the victims, according to the SMM, were civilians living in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Neither the current leadership in Kyiv, nor the commanders of the units in the security zone who control what crosses the line of contact, nor the individual soldiers who receive payment and combatant status if there are skirmishes in their areas want the clashes to end. The Ukrainian authorities are doing all they can to prevent a transition to the key phase of the settlement of the crisis – the agreement on modalities for local elections, the enactment of the law on the special status of Donbas, an amnesty and, lastly, constitutional reform.

Yesterday's meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group also demonstrated this. The Ukrainian Government is refusing even to confirm on paper the Steinmeier formula, which provides for the holding of local elections and the granting of special status to Donbas. As it

is the Ukrainian Government is wriggling out of the agreement on the rules and procedures of the Contact Group and cannot even present its position on the key issues in written form. And Ukraine has no difficulty going back on its verbal pronouncements.

The Ukrainian Government is still blocking the discussion of economic questions within the specialist working group. Our colleagues, including those here in the Permanent Council, talk a great deal about the needs of the civilian population in winter, about the provision of electricity, water and heating. So why don't you exert some influence on the authorities in Kyiv to resolve these issues in practice. Just look at the effort it took to get things moving on the question of repairing the bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska!

Almost two months have elapsed since the parties agreed to a disengagement of forces and hardware in three areas, starting with the Stanytsia Luhanska district. We hope that the process will nevertheless be launched on 26 November if the Ukrainian Government does not once again create a pretext for not doing so. Unfortunately, the camera installed in territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces is still not working. However, according to the SMM reports, it is evident that the Ukrainian armed forces were the ones who opened fire on 17 November, for example.

The facts on the ground clearly show that the claims that the Ukrainian army was only firing back is a complete distortion of reality. The same can be said of the claims that the militia are shelling their own towns.

No doubt they were shooting at their own people on the Maidan in 2014 – as we see, the investigation into the “sniper case” didn't get anywhere. Our colleagues are trying to attribute such a flawed practice to others – not very convincingly. The Ukrainian and United States Governments even tried to present the burning of Trade Union House in Odessa on 2 May 2014 as self-immolation. That investigation also remains at an impasse.

We trust that it will be possible to make use at least of the stabilizing effect of the disengagement of forces and hardware in the two other areas – in Zolote and Petrivske. We welcome the steps taken by the parties to mark the mined areas on the road between Zolote and Pervomaisk.

The population continues to suffer as a result of the shelling of towns, villages and infrastructure. The shelling of a filtration plant in Yasynuvata, which left it without electricity, is cause for great concern. We have listened to the appeals by the representatives of the United States of America and a number of Western colleagues that the security of infrastructure facilities likely to cause serious environmental damage should be ensured. The facility in Yasynuvata was among them. We urge our colleagues to exert greater influence on the Ukrainian Government so that such incidents can be avoided completely.

We once again emphasize that the SMM's efforts should be focused on the security zone, since that is the source of the greatest danger for the local population. Particular attention should be paid to the areas of disengagement of forces and hardware. As for visits to the border, we do not see any problems. The SMM patrols regularly visit it; there were 168 visits over the past two and a half months. No one is restricting them in terms of time or space.

In conclusion, I must once again underscore that the Minsk agreements remain the only framework for a settlement. Everyone recognizes this. However, the Ukrainian Government is not taking real steps to implement them, continuing to put the blame on its neighbour and hoping that the situation will resolve itself.

In fact, it would appear that, far from being resolved, the situation is only getting worse. The protests in Kyiv and other cities have not sprung up out of thin air. Nationalistic rhetoric and the activity of neo-Nazi groups are growing with the indulgence of the Ukrainian authorities. It comes as no surprise that the Ukrainian Government, of course together with the United States, voted against the resolution of the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly condemning the glorification of Nazism – the only two countries among all of the OSCE participating States to do so.

Distinguished colleagues,

It seems to us that the deliberate dragging out – or more precisely the sabotage – of the implementation of the Package of Measures is ruinous for Ukraine, for its people, for its economy and for the situation in Europe as a whole. We urge that serious thought be given to whether such a development of the situation is in everybody's interests.

Thank you for your attention.