

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 994th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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Regarding the situation in Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the distinguished Ambassadors Tim Guldemann and Adam Koberiacki and the heads of the three OSCE institutions for their interesting and informative reports and welcome the Chief Monitor for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, to the Permanent Council.

We value the opportunities offered by the OSCE format for dialogue and for assisting Ukraine to overcome the serious internal political crisis. We support all efforts along these lines, including those of the OSCE Chairmanship, institutions and field presences.

We consider it important to use the OSCE platform for its intended purpose, that is, to search for mutually acceptable solutions. Attempts to turn it into a forum for mutual accusations will not serve this cause, and, what is more, will not help Ukraine.

Russia is following the events in Ukraine closely. Recent developments there once again demonstrate the urgency of launching a nationwide dialogue involving all the political forces and regions of Ukraine and of undertaking thoroughgoing constitutional reform.

We emphasize the inadmissibility of military actions in response to legitimate demands by the people for the safeguarding of their linguistic, cultural and socio-economic rights. We very much hope that the “interim government” of Ukraine will not take actions that could have irreversible consequences.

Meanwhile, its policy is not creating the conditions for resolving tension in Ukraine, which is causing justified indignation in the eastern and southern regions of the country. It is clear that the people are not gaining the impression that the authorities are taking effective measures and considering the interests of the people. If this attitude to the fate of its own people continues, Ukraine will inevitably face new problems and crises.

The process of constitutional reform mentioned by my Ukrainian colleague continues to lack both inclusiveness and transparency. The scraps of information reaching us about the

work of the temporary special commission of the Verkhovna Rada are highly contradictory. As far as we can infer, the deadline for the preparation of amendments to the constitution has been extended to 15 May. We would like to understand what dictated that decision.

Work behind closed doors does not help to allay suspicions that it will once again be a matter of cosmetic changes that do not take account of the interests of all the regions and sectors of the population of Ukraine.

We are convinced that the polyethnic Ukrainian people are not indifferent to the progress of constitutional reform. We would be grateful to receive details from Ukraine, since, regrettably, we are unable to glean them from the reports of the Monitoring Mission.

Last week, we expressed cautious optimism regarding the intentions of the authorities to deal with illegal armed formations of ultra-radicals, collect weapons and carry out an objective investigation of the events on the “Maidan”. Our expression of caution was not misplaced.

It has turned out that, according to Kyiv’s version, Viktor Yanukovich is once again to blame for everything, as is the “Berkut” riot police, which, according to what is emerging from the investigation, shot at its own members.

We note that the radicals have still not been disarmed. On the contrary, they continue to participate in violent actions. Nor have we seen any clear practical actions to neutralize the “Pravy Sektor” (Right Sector) and the “Svoboda” militants.

We are convinced that many people would like to hear clearer statements from Kyiv, at the very least with regard to several more issues.

How will the language issue be settled?

Will the ban on broadcasting Russian television channels remain in force? When will the persecution of Russian journalists and the refusal to allow them to enter Ukraine end?

What is the fate of the political prisoners who were arrested for participating in the protests both before and after the events on the “Maidan” in February?

There is no doubt that greater clarity and transparency and, most importantly, the genuine consideration of the interests of the whole population of Ukraine, and not merely part of it, would help to de-escalate tensions.

Distinguished colleagues,

We welcome the rapid deployment of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. We hope that, in the very near future, it will be able to fully carry out the mandate it has been given. We trust that its activity will contribute to overcoming the internal Ukrainian crisis, eradicating thuggery and ultra-radical tendencies, achieving national harmony and ensuring the observance of the social, political, linguistic, educational, cultural and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Ukraine.

We have studied the Mission's reports carefully. We note that it aims to be guided by facts, but to verify rumours. These facts, and, in particular, the mass protests in the south-east of the country, which are the subject of all the reports, testify that the situation in Ukraine is very tense.

We have heard in the statements of the European Union and the United States of America that there are no grounds for concern as regards the rights of the Russian-speaking population. One has to try very hard not to notice these grounds. They are frightening many residents of Ukraine. I shall mention only a few cases that have occurred in the last few days. Oleg Tsarev, a Russian-speaking deputy of the Verkhovna Rada and a registered presidential candidate, was beaten in Nikolaev yesterday. He was beaten by right-wing extremists, who announced this with pride. Two days ago, extremists stopped the all-Ukrainian Congress of Judges in Kyiv. Finally, a four-storey building in Kyiv which housed the office of the Communist Party was set on fire last night. Even I was frightened when I heard the statement of the well-known "Svoboda" Party deputy Iryna Farion, who calls for anyone who takes part in protests in Kharkiv, Donetsk and other cities in eastern Ukraine to be executed by a firing squad.

We understand that the Mission's possibilities are limited at this stage. However, we trust that the monitors will very soon be operating fully, also with civil society and with information from individual citizens who are unable or afraid to approach the law enforcement bodies in Ukraine.

The "harsh measures" mentioned by the Kyiv authorities to be taken against those who do not wish to acknowledge their legitimacy should be a constant focal point of the OSCE monitors.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize the groundless and frivolous nature of attempts to shift the responsibility for the internal Ukrainian crisis onto Russia and to speak about devious machinations by the intelligence services. It is well known who actually encouraged and supported the "Maidan" and who distributed sandwiches there. We are also concerned by the persistent unwillingness of the authorities in Kyiv to take constructive steps and consider the interests of all the groups of people in Ukraine.

Russia confirms its proposals of international assistance with the beginning of a genuine national dialogue with the participation of all the political forces and regions of Ukraine and the carrying out of significant constitutional reform which takes account of their interests. We are willing to participate in relevant efforts together with our foreign partners.

Thank you for your attention.