



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
in response to the address by Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and
Environmental Activities Ambassador Vuk Žugić**

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1305th meeting of the Permanent Council,
11 March 2021

Madame Chairperson,

We wish to thank Ambassador Žugić for preparing and presenting his report regarding the Co-ordinator's activities in the Second Dimension as well as for his professional and dedicated work as Coordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities in the last four years.

Ukraine welcomes the Coordinator's work that focuses on security-related economic and environmental issues. The expertise that the OCEEA provides as well as its interaction with other participating States in addressing their urgent economic and environmental needs is an important tool in fostering the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the 2nd dimension.

Keeping in mind that one of the Chairpersonship's priorities is to address the environmental threats in a comprehensive approach to security, the delegation of Ukraine wishes to share considerations on growing environmental challenges that should be present on the OSCE agenda.

Yesterday at the EEC meeting we had a productive discussion on the issue of the multiplier role of climate change in environmental challenges. The serious threats that climate change poses to people well-being, health, economic prosperity and security can hardly be overestimated.

Due to the climate change and the global warming it causes, my country faces the increased number of long-lasting droughts, fire forests and shoaling of water resources.

And thus, Ukraine takes into account our partners' successful experience in the field of combating climate change. We also strongly support the international obligations on environmental protection that should be fulfilled in a timely manner.

At the national level Ukraine continues its work aimed at elaborating of the legislative basis in order to resolve current environmental challenges in the most effective and responsible way.

At the same time the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict makes it quite difficult to maintain the environment, in particular in the area affected by the conflict. Armed conflicts in general are often the reasons for the overall deterioration of governance, and the environmental governance is not an exception.

Dear colleagues,

Since the beginning of the Russian aggression the environmental risks in the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas and Crimea became critical.

Beside the direct devastating effect of the military activities, the blatant violations of basic environmental norms and practices are happening regularly in the non-government-controlled areas. These violations lead to massive soil degradations caused by toxic unexploded ordnance and contamination of water resources as well as intensive air pollution. Many wildlife species are in the great danger of extinction. These consequences of the conflict could be irreversible for the region's biodiversity for many years to come.

Our main concern in this regard remains the local population who live in this region and are heavily affected by these environmental implications of the conflict. The Covid-19 pandemic has just compounded the general grave situation.

Since the armed aggression began, the Government of Ukraine was not able to conduct the air and water pollution monitoring on the temporarily occupied areas. The Government also cannot prevent mines from flooding and water resources from contamination in the non-government-controlled areas. And this is one of the main reasons for the overall aggravation of ecological situation in Ukraine.

No less disturbing is the current environmental situation in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The peninsula that used to enjoy its status of a peaceful touristic place now has been turned into a military base. This military springboard is placed in the territory of former national reserves and is resulted in devastating of the unique peninsula's ecosystem.

The ongoing militarization of Crimea and artificial resettlement of people (in the last 7 years more than 500 000 people were resettled from Russia to Crimea) lead to the aggressive usage of its natural resources, in particular water resources.

Dear Ambassador,

We are completely sure that unbiased environmental assessment, in particular the environmental monitoring, should be conducted in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in order to prevent further severe aggravations.

In this regard we encourage the close cooperation between the OSCE Coordinator, the SMM and the UN agencies.

As you have rightly mentioned the political will of all of us would contribute to security, stability and peace.

And we are looking forward to the OCEEA's cooperation and support on resolving of this highly important problem in our common OSCE region.

Finally, Ambassador, I would like to wish you every success in all your future endeavors.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.