

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1190th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 June 2018

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

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, distinguished Ambassador Verba, for this report on his Office's project work and the presentation of the field mission's strategy through to 2021.

We think that the work of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, including extrabudgetary activities, should be as transparent as possible. The projects implemented should take into consideration the lawful rights and interests of all Ukrainian citizens regardless of where they live and irrespective of their ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious identity.

Facilitating internal transformations in Ukraine, developing dialogue between society and the authorities, and mitigating the impact of the internal Ukrainian conflict are ambitious goals. Achieving them will depend to a large measure on the host country government's readiness to listen to the OSCE's point of view. We hope that the Project Co-ordinator will take a principled line and convince the Ukrainian authorities to undertake genuine steps towards reaching the objectives the Project Office has set.

Our view is that the Project Co-ordinator's work to assist reform of legislation in Ukraine should focus on bringing it into line with OSCE commitments. We also see a need for greater efforts by the Co-ordinator in education. Ukraine's Law on Education of 5 September 2017 grossly violates Ukraine's international obligations (including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and the United Nations Convention against Discrimination in Education of 1960), and OSCE documents and recommendations (the Concluding Document of the CSCE Vienna Meeting of 1986, the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE of 1990, the Report of the CSCE Meeting of Experts on National Minorities of 1991, the Hague Recommendations (1996) and Ljubljana Guidelines (2012) of

the High Commissioner on National Minorities), and the Ukrainian Constitution (Articles 10, 24 and 53). The Co-ordinator should focus on working with the authorities to guarantee the rights of Ukraine's Russian-speaking population, national minorities and religious communities in full accordance with the OSCE documents in this area.

We see the Co-ordinator's attempts to encourage dialogue between various representatives of society and the authorities, including the recent discussions in Uzhhorod and Odessa on language policy, with national minorities taking part. Efforts should ensure that public proposals do not go ignored by the Ukrainian authorities. As regards fostering dialogue on Donbas, we believe that for it to be genuinely inclusive representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions must be involved.

The Project Co-ordinator's efforts to minimize the impact of the conflict in eastern Ukraine should not be limited to assisting demobilized Ukrainian armed forces personnel and members of volunteer battalions. The Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) is reporting a growing number of incidents involving radical nationalism in Ukraine, including crimes motivated by ethnic hatred, which the authorities indulge and do not punish. The Project Co-ordinator should intervene here in a bid to reverse this negative trend.

Serious attention should also go to combating corruption and protecting freedom of speech and journalists in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Government is toughening restrictions on broadcasting in the Russian language, blocking the work of undesirable media outlets and refusing entry to journalists from foreign news agencies. The media is being intimidated with the Ukrainian Security Service's "execution lists" and by the Mirotvorets website. Physical violence against those who do not show loyalty to the current government policy has become more frequent and these incidents are not being investigated.

We are following closely the Project Co-ordinator's work on demining, chemical security, and protecting vital civilian infrastructure sites. Work in these important areas should be very carefully planned, prepared and implemented, in consideration of the views of the authorities and forces controlling the situation on the ground, without anticipating anything, and without undermining the agreements reached in the Trilateral Contact Group.

Thank you for your attention.