
Chairmanship: Poland**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
(1356th Plenary Meeting)**

1. Date: Monday, 21 February 2022 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 3.05 p.m.

Closed: 6.15 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador A. Hałaciński

Chairperson, Russian Federation (Annex 1), Ukraine

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: THE SITUATION IN AND AROUND UKRAINE,
INCLUDING THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN
EASTERN UKRAINE

Chairperson, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Secretary General (SEC.GAL/32/22 OSCE+), Ukraine (Annex 2), Austria (Annex 3), Canada (Annex 4), Russian Federation (Annex 5), France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/235/22), United States of America (Annex 6), United Kingdom (Annex 7), Belarus (PC.DEL/233/22 OSCE+), Turkey (Annex 8), Switzerland (PC.DEL/252/22 OSCE+), Iceland (Annex 9), Georgia (PC.DEL/238/22 OSCE+), Germany, France (also on behalf of Germany) (Annex 10), Norway (PC.DEL/234/22), Bosnia and Herzegovina (PC.DEL/236/22 OSCE+), Latvia (Annex 11), Azerbaijan, Lithuania (Annex 12), OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA.GAL/6/22 OSCE+)

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 3 March 2022, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1356
21 February 2022
Annex 1

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

1356th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1356, Point 2

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to make the following procedural comments on the proposed first item on the agenda of the special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council.

As is well known, Russia does not support and has never supported the wording of the first item on the agenda of today's meeting. It is based on the political stances of some participating States and does not reflect the whole spectrum of opinions in the OSCE.

Under paragraph IV.1(C)3 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE, draft agendas of the meetings of the Permanent Council shall be prepared and issued in advance by the Chairmanship, taking into account views expressed by participating States. The OSCE Chairmanship did not hold such consultations with regard to today's meeting, at least not with Russia. It goes without saying that the current discussion should not set a precedent for the future.

We take the position that, given the current situation in the country, the discussions in the OSCE Permanent Council on Ukraine should focus primarily on the implementation of the Minsk agreements and compliance with the ceasefire-strengthening measures of 22 July 2020 agreed upon by the representatives of the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk. These basic agreements, reached within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group and facilitated by the Normandy format, are the basis for promoting a political settlement. They contain clear references to the role of the OSCE in this regard.

In the discussion of the crisis in Ukraine, issues of a political nature cannot be ignored. The Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015, endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202, remains the only internationally recognized document regulating the peaceful, political and diplomatic settlement of the conflict in eastern Ukraine in order to preserve its territorial integrity and achieve national reconciliation. The document has become part of international law and is binding. In accordance with the Package of Measures, political steps within the framework of the internal Ukrainian dialogue between representatives of the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk

should be taken under the auspices and with the assistance of the OSCE. Unfortunately, even after eight years of conflict, there has still been no progress on this front, and the cannonade of Ukrainian artillery continues to cause the sky over Donbas to tremble.

As for the external aspects of the crisis around Ukraine proposed for discussion today, the debate here should focus primarily on the violation by quite a number of OSCE participating States of their commitments under the Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crisis Situations, the Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers and a whole range of other commitments to prevent the supply of lethal weapons and military equipment to conflict regions where they may foment tension, lead to military escalation or be used to violate human rights.

We recall the 2002 Porto Ministerial Council decision (Role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office) and OSCE Permanent Council Decision No. 485 (OSCE Statements and Public Information) on the role of the OSCE Chairmanship. In accordance with these decisions, the Chairmanship must ensure that “its actions are not inconsistent with positions agreed by all the participating States and that the whole spectrum of opinions of participating States is taken into account”.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of today’s special meeting of the Permanent Council.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1356
21 February 2022
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

1356th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1356, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful for your efforts in promptly and efficiently responding to Ukraine's request to convene this special meeting of the Permanent Council.

The security situation along the entire line of contact in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions remains extremely tense and fragile, and it shows a clear tendency towards deterioration.

To be more precise, towards an escalation fully controlled by the Russian Federation.

On 18 February, the ceasefire was violated 66 times. These violations included 60 instances of targeted fire. Weaponry proscribed under the Minsk agreements was used in 53 cases. In total, 129 artillery rounds of 122 mm calibre, 403 mortar rounds of 120 mm calibre and 166 mortar rounds of 82 mm calibre were fired. Sniper fire was registered on ten occasions.

On 19 February, there was an even higher number of ceasefire violations by the Russian armed formations, namely 136, of which 123 involved targeted fire. There were also three instances in which the line of contact was crossed by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) belonging to the Russian formations, most likely of the Orlan-10 type.

Weaponry proscribed under the Minsk agreements was used in no fewer than 119 instances.

All in all, 18 artillery rounds of 152 mm calibre, 13 tank rounds of 125 mm calibre, 458 artillery rounds of 122 mm calibre, 572 mortar rounds of 120 mm calibre, and 242 mortar rounds of 82 mm calibre were fired. Two Ukrainian soldiers were killed and five sustained injuries.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has confirmed a dramatic increase in kinetic activity along the line of contact.

Among the targets of the Russian shelling are civilian objects, including kindergartens and schools with children inside, residential buildings, and civilian and critical infrastructure.

The failed attempts to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) on 18 and 19 February – including attempts initiated by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Kinnunen – further confirm Russia's determination to aggravate the situation.

This applies not only to the occupied territories.

Last week, we held a series of meetings under Chapter III of the Vienna Document 2011.

Against the backdrop of those meetings, we heard, *inter alia*, that every Russian soldier would leave Belarus after the exercise had finished and that some Russian units were already departing from Ukraine's eastern border. The exercise was supposed to have ended yesterday, on 20 February.

However, the reality turns out to be quite different.

Over the weekend, the number of Russian troops in the vicinity of Donbas continued to grow and it appears that the Russian forces in Belarus are going to stay.

This is not surprising, given that the tensions in Donbas have been provoked by Russia itself.

Obviously, Russia is clutching at any pretext to keep its armed forces close to Ukraine's borders.

The latest remarks by the Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization about the possible deployment of so-called peacekeeping forces to Donbas reveal part of the Kremlin's plans and the purpose of Russia's military build-up.

He was speculating about a 17,000-strong force maintained in constant readiness and a specialized peacekeeping contingent of nearly 4,000 troops.

I wish to make it clear that this Russian-controlled military bloc cannot set itself up as a peacekeeper in a region occupied by Russia.

However, these remarks make it even easier to understand why Russia is creating a fictitious scenario involving a humanitarian catastrophe in the occupied territories together with imminent military confrontation.

Dear colleagues,

I shall now turn to another aspect of the escalation in Donbas.

While provocative shelling occurs along the entire line of contact, Russia's disinformation campaign is in full swing.

Obviously, Russia needs an information pretext for further aggressive steps.

Here are just a few recent examples:

- A failed attempt to use the shelling of a kindergarten in Stanytsia Luhanska to accuse the Ukrainian armed forces of bombarding the occupied territories;
- An alleged chemical incident near Horlivka – warning of the possibility of such a scenario was given about a month ago;
- The blowing up of a Soviet-era car in the centre of Donetsk – this attack was supposed to have targeted the leader of a so-called people’s militia (of course, he was not using that old vehicle);
- As reported by the Russian media, an act of sabotage against the Luhansk gas distribution hub, which resulted in the Druzhba pipeline catching fire. However, this pipeline was in fact disconnected from the Ukrainian gas transport system after the invasion of Russian troops in 2014, and it is not used for the supply of gas to Ukraine or through Ukraine. This incident gives us a foretaste of what Russia would do with the Ukrainian gas transport system if the Nord Stream 2 pipeline were already in operation.
- Next, a story about two shells from a Grad multiple-launch rocket system fired by the Ukrainian armed forces that allegedly fell on Russian territory, namely in the village of Mityakinskaya (Rostov region). Quite apart from the fact that the Ukrainian artillery units are positioned at a distance from this village that exceeds the firing range of Grad rocket systems, it appears that the script for this provocation was written back in 2014. Just as in the present case, “Ukrainian shells” eight years ago fell at exactly the same distance of 300 metres from a residential building in the same village.

The Russian leadership is also ramping up its rhetoric about “ethnic cleansing” and “genocide”. Those are very serious accusations but they call to mind, rather, the images of Grozny after Russian troops entered the city. These photos can easily be found on the Internet.

I would remind the Russian authorities that the people of Sloviansk, Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Kostiantynivka, Bakhmut, Rubizhne, Sievierodonetsk and many other cities and settlements of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are happy that Ukraine is back.

That cannot be said of those cities still under Russian occupation.

Furthermore, Russia is trying to play the card of mass graves.

However, neither the International Committee of the Red Cross nor the Ukrainian humanitarian missions have access to these territories. This creates a lot of scope for manipulation by Russia’s State agencies and for accusations that cannot be verified.

All these staged provocations and propaganda stunts are meaningless for us. However, the Russian people and the residents of the occupied territories are the main target audience. Unfortunately, according to our intelligence sources, further provocations are expected over the coming days, including some featuring the alleged use of UAVs. Russia continues to act in accordance with its destabilization plans, even though these plans have been exposed so many times.

However, let me make it quite clear that the Russian Federation as the occupying power is responsible for the situation in the temporarily occupied territories. Any damage that may be inflicted on people or infrastructure in the temporarily occupied territories would be a provocation.

Russia in fact wants to play out the same scenario as it did in 2008 against Georgia – starting with military exercises and provocations, followed by mass evacuation and then invasion and formalization of its proxies.

The so-called emergency evacuation announced on Friday epitomizes what is happening.

That the relevant video appeal was pre-recorded two days before the announcement is very telling. No doubt, the evacuation was launched to sustain a narrative about an imminent Ukrainian attack – this regardless of the fact that the Ukrainian armed forces are displaying restraint, despite the provocative fire along the line of contact.

More and more details are emerging which show that Russia considers people merely to be pawns in its geopolitical games. Children and women have been left for days without food, in cold buses, waiting to be settled anywhere in the Rostov region.

To encourage people to leave the territories, the Russian President even promised to pay 10,000 roubles, or about 110 euros, to those evacuated. That is not such a big amount, but it clearly illustrates the social and economic realities in the occupied territories under Russia's rule.

Some people who have experienced the real “care” of Russia are already starting to return to their homes.

In the meantime, Russia is shelling checkpoints. Even a humanitarian convoy of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees came under fire as it was returning from the occupied areas. A vehicle of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination was fired at near a checkpoint and destroyed yesterday.

Russia is obviously striking at humanitarian corridors in order to intimidate people and to prevent them from leaving for Ukraine. These are inhuman and immoral tactics.

Furthermore, on Sunday night, children from a Donetsk orphanage were transferred to an unknown location in Russia.

That is yet another provocation straight out of Russia's old playbook. Children from Donbas were transferred to Russia on three occasions between June and August 2014.

We call upon the Russian Federation not to repeat the mistakes of the past and to return these children to Ukraine, as the European Court of Human Rights ordered it to do back in 2014.

It is absolutely unacceptable that children are being used for the purposes of war propaganda.

The forced evacuation of Ukrainian citizens from the occupied territories has to cease. This campaign amounts to forcible transfer of the population from the occupied areas, which is forbidden under international humanitarian law and could be qualified as a war crime.

This orchestrated evacuation is depriving people of their homes, property and jobs; it is dividing families.

It also violates their right to life, their right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way, their right to liberty and security, their right to respect for their private life and to freedom of movement. All these rights are protected under the legally binding European Convention on Human Rights.

In this regard, even more concerning are the reports that men between the ages of 18 and 55 years are banned from leaving the occupied territories and are being forcibly enlisted in the Russian occupation forces.

This is another gross violation of international humanitarian law.

The forced evacuation of children and women and the forced conscription of men prove that everyone in the occupied territories is caught in a trap. There are no rights and freedoms for them – they are nothing but pawns in the hands of the occupying power.

Together with large-scale passportization, this clearly demonstrates Russia's attitude towards the residents of the occupied territories.

They are cynically used as a smokescreen and as human shields while Russia provokes new escalations and implements its scenario aimed at the political subordination of Ukraine.

Russia's massive disinformation campaign has been sustained largely by State-sponsored media.

In view of this, I should like to reiterate my previous appeal to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media to follow this situation closely.

Even the Russian intelligentsia clearly state that in an open letter addressed to the Russian leadership. I quote: "State television broadcasts only one point of view, namely that of the supporters of war". End of quote.

It is time to call a spade a spade. This has nothing in common with freedom of the media and speech. Such propaganda of war and hatred towards the Ukrainians and the West cannot be tolerated any more.

Distinguished colleagues,

Regardless of Russia's provocations, Ukraine remains firmly committed to a political settlement, and together with our partners we intend to pursue diplomatic dialogue.

Ukraine has no plans to launch any offensive operation against the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions or to conduct any acts of sabotage in Donbas:

- The Ukrainian armed forces remain in their positions;
- No rotations of units of the Ukrainian armed forces are taking place that could cause concern. There is no single SMM report that could motivate such concerns;
- The troop strength of the Ukrainian armed forces does not exceed the numbers as at 22 December 2021, when a statement was issued concerning the determination of the TCG participants to fully adhere to the ceasefire;
- The Ukrainian armed forces are strictly adhering to the ceasefire.

At the same time, we believe that at this critical juncture, establishing the facts on the ground is more important than ever.

It is essential to use all possible tools available within the OSCE in order to address the security situation and contribute to its de-escalation. In view of this, Ukraine's Foreign Minister has invited the OSCE Troika to undertake an urgent fact-finding visit to Ukraine within the framework of the early warning mechanism that was activated by OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid last week.

Ukraine is prepared to render all the necessary assistance for the conduct of such a mission; it is fully open for co-operation with the mission team and willing to provide all the information required.

Ukraine also stands ready to host additional observer missions under Chapter X of the Vienna Document 2011. Ukraine is willing to demonstrate the highest possible level of military transparency.

On the other hand, we call upon the Russian Federation to make use of the procedures provided for in the Vienna Document and to implement the recommendations raised during Friday's special joint meeting of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation in order to enhance military transparency along Ukraine's border and facilitate de-escalation.

The SMM's monitoring activities, conducted in full compliance with its mandate, are now more important than ever. We call upon Russia to take urgent steps so as to help the

Mission to operate safely in the occupied territories and fulfil properly the mandate with which it was tasked by the Permanent Council. The threatening of monitors is unacceptable.

We strongly believe that it is of the utmost importance to preserve the efficient and fully fledged monitoring carried out by the SMM in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, especially in the border areas.

We appreciate the efforts by the participating States aimed at maintaining the SMM's monitoring capability at an adequate level, especially their readiness to increase the number of properly qualified monitors, despite the current security challenges.

We also call for an immediate and impartial international investigation of the reported incidents on Russian territory. Ukraine has never opened any fire in that direction and resolutely refutes all such accusations.

Last but not least, we urge the Russian Federation to de-escalate the situation and engage constructively, as a party to the conflict, in dialogue within the existing frameworks, including the Normandy format and the TCG.

What Russia has to do is simply to unblock the negotiation process.

For at present, Russia is blocking all initiatives on all tracks, including the security, humanitarian, and political tracks. Do we need any more evidence that Russia has no interest in a peaceful settlement? It is just looking for leverage with which to control Ukraine and an instrument for blackmailing the West.

It is high time for Russia to stop its blackmailing based on shells and bullets, killed and wounded soldiers and civilians, and destroyed civilian infrastructure.

Dear colleagues,

The Russian Federation is enunciating its so-called "national interests" in a way that in fact undermines the existential interests of neighbouring States.

A right of veto on the free choice of foreign policy orientation by others has nothing to do with equal security.

Human suffering caused by aggressive promotion of its national interests has nothing to do with comprehensive security.

Threatening the use of force has nothing to do with indivisible security – the notion under which Russia is trying to mask its expansionist course.

Russia's readiness to launch a new attack leaves us with no other option but to defend Ukrainian freedom, sovereignty and statehood.

Despite Russia's propaganda, nobody is waiting for Russia in Ukraine. Quite the opposite in fact – people are taking to the streets, especially in the eastern and southern regions, to show unity in the face of a possible Russian attack. This serves to rebut Russia's

propaganda about the alleged mistreatment of Russian-speaking people in Ukraine. There would be no welcome for Russian troops, but resistance instead.

Ukraine, for its part, will continue seeking a diplomatic settlement of the armed conflict, solely on the basis of international law.

Ukrainian citizens live on both sides of the line of contact. Their peace, security and well-being are an absolute priority for Ukraine.

Moreover, our citizens living on both sides of the line of contact deserve a dignified diplomatic settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict that would ensure their freedom and prosperity and not lead to further suffering and subjugation.

As President Zelenskyy stated at the recent Munich Security Conference:

“We are ready to look for the key to the end of the war in all possible formats and platforms. [...] What is really important is the understanding that peace is needed not only by us – the world needs peace in Ukraine. Peace and restoration of territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders. This is the only way. And I hope no one thinks of Ukraine as a [...] buffer zone between the West and Russia. This will never happen. Nobody will allow that”. End of quote.

If Russia is serious about its commitment to peace, there is no room for threats or intimidation.

And if we are serious about our commitment to maintaining peace, it is time for resolute actions and measures in order to prevent a new aggression instead of reacting to one when it is too late.

The people in Ukraine have already endured enough as it is and should not be expected to suffer further.

We are convinced that the most effective way to dispel our concerns about a possible new Russian attack remains the immediate withdrawal by Russia of its troops from the border with Ukraine and from the temporarily occupied Crimean peninsula; the abandonment of its belligerent rhetoric, threats to use force, and disinformation campaign against Ukraine; and the fulfilment in good faith of the security provisions of the Minsk agreements.

Mr. Chairperson, I kindly request that our statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1356
21 February 2022
Annex 3

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

1356th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1356, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF AUSTRIA**

Mr. Chairperson,
Esteemed colleagues,

Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. In addition, allow me to make a few remarks in my national capacity and on behalf of the Federal Minister.

At the outset, I should like to thank Ambassadors Kinnunen and Çevik for their valuable work under the most difficult conditions, their impartiality and their sober, pragmatic assessment of the situation.

Let me be clear: When the breach of international law and the use of military force is being considered an option, when disinformation and the manipulation of people's opinions is being used as a weapon, then several red lines have been crossed – legally, politically and morally. That is why our full solidarity belongs to Ukraine at this time.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are at a crossroads in Europe's history: Do we want to halt the downward spiral of the past months or do we want to slide knowingly into a political, military and human catastrophe? Lasting stability and security in Europe is only possible with Russia, not against it. On the other hand, lasting stability and security for Russia is only possible with Europe, not against it.

Especially here, in the OSCE, it must be the goal of all of us to prevent a further escalation of the situation or even a war. It is precisely here, in the OSCE, that all parties involved should choose the path of diplomacy and dialogue. For it is the OSCE that is the appropriate place for us to set out our differences and resolve them in a civilized manner, with mutual respect and without the use of force. It is this path – the peaceful settlement of disputes – to which we all committed ourselves almost 50 years ago in the Helsinki Final Act.

Our Organization does not lack formats and tools, but political will. It is our duty to use these instruments honestly and in a results-oriented manner. I therefore call on Russia to

give the Renewed European Security Dialogue launched by the Polish OSCE Chairmanship a chance to enable us to reduce tensions together in a credible and comprehensible way and to make the much-cited “toolbox” of our Organization effective.

This includes the immediate, substantial withdrawal of Russian military forces from the border region with Ukraine and comprehensive compliance with the voluntary commitments in the fields of risk reduction and transparency as set out in the Vienna Document. It is also incumbent on all of us to fully support active engagement by the Chairmanship and the Troika to defuse the current situation. Austria stands ready to do its part.

Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Further military force and warfare – conventional, cyber or hybrid – would not solve a single problem but would only create more suffering. This path would leave us all as losers. We must and can prevent this together.

Mr. Chairperson,

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you for your attention.



1356th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1356, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

Mr. Chairperson,

I thank you and your team for convening this meeting today, and Canada looks forward to hearing more about the fact-finding mission mentioned. I would also like to thank Ambassador Çevik and Ambassador Kinnunen, and Secretary General Schmid for your reports, and to you and your teams for your very important work.

Mr. Chairperson,

Canada deplores the situation that Russia has created and continues to stoke in eastern Ukraine. Since we met in this room three days ago – for a Vienna Document meeting in which Ukraine had sought de-escalation, but that Russia refused to attend – we have seen an inordinate increase of ceasefire violations, and in particular explosions, initiated by the Russian-backed armed formations. This is resulting in a precarious degradation of the security situation along the entire line of contact. We condemn the use of heavy weaponry and indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, including damage to critical civilian infrastructure, which constitute a clear violation of the Minsk agreements.

The armed formations are shelling residential areas, have shelled an elementary school, and are shelling Ukrainian armed forces positions, leading to the death of 34-year-old Captain Anton Sydorov. In the face of this offensive, the Ukrainian armed forces are showing phenomenal restraint: they remain in their positions, with their Minsk-proscribed weapons in designated storage areas, and in compliance with July 2020 agreement to strengthen the ceasefire regime.

The same cannot be said for the Russian-backed armed formations. There, we see the deliberate creation of a climate of fear, telling civilians to leave the non-government controlled areas, with Russia announcing that it will pay 10,000 roubles those who “evacuate” to Rostov and Voronezh. The armed formations are also forcefully conscripting men between 18 and 55 years of age, to prepare for the supposed “imminent attack” from Ukraine. We condemn the countless attempts by Russia and its armed formations so far this month to spread and perpetuate the blatantly false narrative that Ukraine is intending to regain control of those areas under separatist control by force.

Let us be exceedingly clear. Since 2014, Ukraine has never launched an offensive into the non-government controlled areas. The proposition that Ukraine would choose this moment, with over 170,000 Russian troops at its doorstep, to suddenly try and seize control of the non-government controlled areas by force has no basis in reality and defies any concept of logic. It is an absurd and preposterous contention. But what is obvious is that Russia now has enough military power in place to launch a massive attack on Ukraine. With the false narratives it is deploying, it is becoming ever more clear that Russia is attempting to recycle its script from Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 to deceive the world. This will not work.

Mr. Chairperson,

At any point, Russia can choose to engage in dialogue and diplomatic solutions to address its security concerns. Many options have been put on the table, including at the OSCE: the Chairmanship's Renewed European Security Dialogue, last week's Vienna Document Chapter III meetings, and Saturday's emergency Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) meeting. It has thus far refused to engage in any of these. By contrast, Ukraine is using every available option to engage in dialogue, including by initiating the Vienna Document discussions last week, and by requesting emergency TCG meetings to discuss this concerning surge in ceasefire violations. Russia also has the option to engage constructively in a diplomatic solution and to de-escalate the situation before it is too late. It has not done so, and there must be no doubt whatsoever: If Russia further invades Ukraine, it will have done so in a deliberate, premeditated manner.

We fervently hope that Russia chooses a different path. There is always a diplomatic option. But if Russia chooses further military aggression against Ukraine then Canada and its allies and partners will stand with Ukraine and impose massive consequences and severe costs on the Russian economy.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1356
21 February 2022
Annex 5

ENGLISH
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1356th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No.1356, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

We once again welcome the distinguished Ambassadors Mikko Kinnunen and Yaşar Halit Çevik to today's special meeting of the Permanent Council. We listened carefully to their reports delivered against the backdrop of the sharply deteriorating situation in eastern Ukraine.

As we speak, there are reports of intensified fighting along the entire line of contact, large-scale shelling of the suburbs of Donetsk and Luhansk and operations by Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups in certain areas of Donbas. Over the past few days, several shells have been fired from Ukrainian territory towards the Russian border. This morning, border infrastructure in the Rostov region of the Russian Federation was damaged as a result of such an incident. In addition, an attempted violation of the Russian border by a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group consisting of at least five individuals and two armoured vehicles was recorded nearby.

The current escalation in Donbas is caused by the tacit connivance of a number of Western countries in the Ukrainian authorities' refusal to fulfil in good faith their obligations under the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015, which was endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202. I would remind you that the document should have been fully implemented by the end of 2015 through direct dialogue between the representatives of the conflicting parties – the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk – and with the assistance of the OSCE and its Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). In accordance with the Package of Measures, the settlement is based on a number of politico-military commitments: a complete ceasefire, the withdrawal of weapons, the disengagement of forces and hardware of the parties to the conflict, constitutional reform with the enshrining of a special status for certain areas of Donbas on a permanent basis, an amnesty for the participants in the events in Donbas, the holding of local elections, the resumption of socio-economic ties and so on. Virtually none of this has been done, first and foremost because the tasks of the Ukrainian authorities backed by nationalists have not changed – fostering Russophobia, forced Ukrainization and suppressing dissent.

Coming to power in 2019, the current President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, had enormous support from voters who believed his promises of achieving peace in Donbas within one year and implementing the Minsk agreements. In practice, however, he set himself against his own electorate. Under pressure from the nationalists and his external handlers, he has chosen to sabotage the Minsk agreements and pretend to participate in the settlement process. Today, after almost three years in power, the current President of Ukraine openly claims that he is not satisfied with a single paragraph of the Package of Measures and that the document itself is allegedly “third-rate”. Other Ukrainian officials are increasingly stating that the Minsk agreements are not binding or are unworkable in principle. For example, the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, Oleksii Danilov, the current Minister of Defence and former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Reintegration, Oleksii Reznikov, and most of Ukraine’s representatives in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) have repeatedly made such statements.

The simulation of diplomatic efforts for a settlement by the Ukrainian Government’s representatives and the empty bustle in the TCG merely serve as a smokescreen for the Ukrainian authorities to prepare for a scenario that was announced long ago – their so-called Plan B. As far back as December 2019, Mr. Zelenskyy said that such a plan for the “return of territories” had been worked out by the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine. It is becoming clear that the Plan B involves an attempt to carry out a lightning-fast offensive in Donbas and, of course, does not provide for any direct dialogue with the region’s representatives.

The Ukrainian authorities’ willingness to pursue a military scenario is reinforced by a number of NATO member countries delivering lethal weapons that could be used for offensive purposes. In addition, hundreds of so-called instructors – in fact, military personnel of foreign armed formations from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and a number of other countries – have been methodically preparing the Ukrainian military for offensive operations in urban areas and training them in the use of foreign weaponry in recent years.

All this, coupled with the *de facto* flight of personnel hailing from a number of Western countries from the SMM and from Ukraine in general suggests very unpleasant historical parallels. Military solutions in conflict regions within the OSCE’s area of responsibility and beyond have been implemented under similar schemes of Western-centric logic. For example, in the former Yugoslavia and its autonomous province of Kosovo, where a group of OSCE participating States, drawing on the “rule of force”, proceeded to bomb the territory of another OSCE participating State in violation of international law. No one has yet been held accountable. We can also take a broader global view and recall the course of events in Iraq, Syria, Libya and so on.

We did not have to wait long for the result of the Ukrainian Government’s persistent sabotage of the Minsk agreements and Ukraine “being pumped full” of foreign weapons – the situation at the line of contact has deteriorated sharply and armed provocations by the Ukrainian security forces have resumed. In recent days, the SMM has recorded a spike in ceasefire violations along the line of contact and an increase in the use of heavy weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements.

The Mission was unable to confirm which side was responsible for the alleged shelling of a kindergarten in Stanytsia Luhanska in territory controlled by the Ukrainian military. Meanwhile, information on water and gas infrastructure facilities and the many residential buildings destroyed by shelling in certain areas of Donbas has not been reflected in its reports. Of extreme concern are the reports by the Luhansk authorities of an attempt by the Ukrainian armed forces in the early hours of 20 February to break through near the settlement of Pionerske, which resulted in the death of two civilians. In addition, there are reports of an attempt by a sabotage group to break through to the Novoazovsk district in the south of the Donetsk region in the early hours of 21 February and of the shelling of the Petrovskiyi and Kyivskiyi districts of Donetsk city, as a result of which a civilian was killed and two school buildings were seriously damaged. We expect the SMM to clarify all reports of destruction and casualties thoroughly and promptly and to reflect them in its reports in a timely manner.

The logic of the OSCE leadership's actions also raises questions. Last week, the distinguished Secretary General, Ms. Helga Schmid, announced the launch of an "early warning" mechanism. We may recall how silent the OSCE was when, for example, in October 2021, the Ukrainian military carried out offensive operations in the south of the Donetsk region. At that time, the SMM confirmed the advance of the Ukrainian armed forces by more than a kilometre and their construction of engineering structures near the settlements of Hranitne and Staromarivka. As I recall, these actions led to an escalation along the entire line of contact, during which the Ukrainian armed forces used freshly delivered foreign strike weapons systems. Where was the "early warning" then? Ultimately, this mechanism should have been launched eight years ago, at the height of the events on the Maidan that triggered the start of the bloody conflict, or when the fiercest fighting was taking place in Donbas in August 2014 and January–February 2015.

We were surprised at the joint statement by the distinguished OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Zbigniew Rau, and Secretary General Schmid of 18 February, in which, among other things, they deplore – as mentioned – "the spreading of disinformation about an imminent military action by Ukrainian government forces". At the same time, there has been no reaction on the part of the OSCE leadership and no warning against whipping up hysteria and confrontation, when in recent months false "predictions" of a mythical "Russian invasion of Ukraine" (with postponed dates every week) have been heard in political circles and the press in a number of countries.

All this raises very serious questions in terms of the OSCE leadership's ability to make a constructive contribution to the settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis objectively and without any bias.

Ambassador Kinnunen,

We cannot hide our disappointment that you have joined the campaign to actually try to justify the actions of the Ukrainian military in the face of the current escalation in Donbas. We regret that you did not heed the signals regarding the need to remain impartial that were sent to you in Moscow on 15 February when you accompanied OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Rau. These manifestations of partisanship will hardly contribute to the success of the TCG's work under your leadership.

Please share with us your reasons for being confident that the Ukrainian General Staff has no offensive plans. Do you have written assurances from the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, to that effect? Perhaps, with your participation, an agreement was reached in the TCG in which the Ukrainian representative confirmed in writing that no offensive operations were being planned? It is worth recalling today how, for almost a year, the Ukrainian military leadership refused to publish orders in accordance with the ceasefire-strengthening measures agreed on in July 2020 in the TCG.

We would stress that there is a group of several thousand Ukrainian armed forces concentrated near the line of contact in Donbas. Representatives of the Ukrainian leadership at various levels are making statements that essentially negate the Minsk agreements and pave the way for a settlement of the so-called Donbas issue by force.

Incidentally, today marks exactly eight years since the signing in Kyiv of the agreement between the then President, Viktor Yanukovich, and the leaders of the protests on resolving the political crisis in Ukraine. High-ranking representatives of France, Germany and Poland, who put their signatures to that document, acted as guarantors for the agreement. The very next day, with their tacit connivance, the text was trampled underfoot: representatives of the opposition, with the support of illegal armed groups and nationalist formations, carried out a coup d'état, proclaiming themselves the new government. All this led to an armed civil conflict in eastern Ukraine. A similar approach can apparently be observed now with regard to the Minsk agreements: their sabotage is met with similar condonation from abroad. This has the potential to bring about another wave of bloodshed.

Urgent measures are needed to force the Ukrainian Government to abandon its military logic and to begin the full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015 as soon as possible in direct dialogue with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk. The key to lasting peace, the restoration of civil accord in Ukraine and the defusing of the tension around this country lies in the implementation of the Minsk agreements in good faith. All that the Ukrainian Government needs to do is sit down at the negotiating table with the representatives of Donbas and agree on and implement political, military, economic and humanitarian measures to end the conflict.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of today's special meeting of the Permanent Council.

Thank you for your attention.



1356th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1356, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

And thanks to you both, Ambassadors Kinnunen and Çevik, for your briefings today and for your tireless efforts at peacemaking. We are grateful for everything you are doing. And, yes, facts matter.

Dear colleagues, today we sit on the precipice of a full-scale Russian war against Ukraine. It is a very difficult conclusion to have to reach. So many participating States around this table have dedicated so much energy to the diplomatic path, looking for all possible ways to de-escalate in keeping with our core principles. We took Russia's security concerns seriously. We put new proposals on the table. We tried to think of new transparency, confidence-building, and arms control concepts that would help us build a stronger and more durable European security architecture. We launched a new European Security Dialogue to spur creative ideas and to allow every country at this table to have a voice in our collective security. And we remain – and always will remain – committed to dialogue and diplomacy. And to peace. Especially to peace.

But facts are stubborn: none of us can ignore that Russia's forces have been growing at an alarming rate, and that so many strike troops are poised for attack within mere kilometres of Ukraine's borders. And all of this is coincident with a massive and unusual troop deployment in Belarus immediately adjacent to Ukraine's border – a so-called "exercise" that we were all told would end yesterday, but which has now been indefinitely extended. Coincident with a large-scale nuclear exercise. Coincident with a massive naval build-up in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Coincident with bellicose rhetoric suggesting Ukraine either should not be a State or should not have an independent foreign policy.

Colleagues, I know many in this room thought several months ago that perhaps we were just witnessing an exercise in coercive diplomacy. And while none of us can predict the future, we also cannot ignore such an unprecedented threat of force. History teaches us that threats of force – whether euphemistically called "military-technical means" or whatever other term of art – all too often devolve into the actual use of force. Innocent lives are at stake, and for that reason we must redouble our efforts at preventing this war of aggression from being launched.

Colleagues, as you all know, this is the most significant military mobilization in Europe since the Cold War. Russian soldiers, tanks, aircraft, and ships encircle Ukraine. Already we have witnessed cyberattacks against Ukraine. But I would be remiss to use the passive voice. We have technical information that links the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate, or GRU, to the distributed denial of service attacks last week against the Ukrainian banking systems. Finally, let us not forget that the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine's (SMM) recorded ceasefire violations in recent days have more than doubled last year's daily average, as Ambassador Çevik just noted.

Let me be as clear as I possibly can. This is not hype. This is not hysteria. This is not a provocation. Despite what Russia tries to allege, the cold hard truth is that Russia is right now trying to create a pretext for military action. We have been predicting this and sharing information in real time about the possibility of a false flag operation.

To anyone familiar with Russian tactics, this is not new. It comes straight from the playbook based on denial, deception, and disinformation – aimed at creating just enough plausible doubt to keep us off balance until it is too late. We saw this in Ukraine in 2014. We saw it in Georgia in 2008. And last week, the world saw a prime example of Russia's deception with its fake withdrawal of forces from the Crimean peninsula. Instead of de-escalating, Russia has actually considerably increased its build-up of forces and equipment near Ukraine, in Belarus, and in the Black Sea.

Whenever we discuss Russian aggression against Ukraine in this Council, Russia invariably repeats its assertion that it is not a party to the conflict in Ukraine. It attempts to propagate the false narrative that it is merely a “mediator,” as if the rocket launchers, electronic warfare systems, and tanks in the Russian-controlled parts of Donetsk and Luhansk were produced locally, commanded and controlled by locals. Nothing could be further from the truth. Let us recall that not long ago, a Russian court acknowledged the presence of tens of thousands of Russian troops in the Donbas. We therefore call on Russia, as a signatory of the Minsk agreements and as the aggressor in this conflict, to honour its commitments to international peace and security.

Let us also pause to think about what war actually means. It means carnage. It means humanitarian disaster. It means the deaths of civilians: innocent men, women and children. Like the 14,000 who have already died in this war since 2014. War also means occupation, imprisonment, torture. Already we have received reports of forced mobilization of men and boys, taken against their will to assembly points and then on to the front lines in the Russian-controlled parts of Donetsk and Luhansk. And let us be clear: this would be an offensive war, a war of choice, planned for months in advance. All that separates us from this war right now is one fabricated pretext.

The United States and its allies have been clear that our response should Russia attack Ukraine will be unified, swift, and severe. We have been clear that if Russia further invades Ukraine, it will become a pariah to the international community, it will become isolated from global financial markets, and it will be deprived of the most sophisticated technological inputs. We have also been equally clear that there is still a diplomatic path forward if Russia is willing to engage. Until the tanks are rolling, the planes are flying, and the aggression has fully begun, we are going to do everything we can to pursue diplomacy. The United States therefore once again urges Russia to stop its dangerous provocations and the pursuit of a

pretext to further invade Ukraine. Let us return to the negotiating table before any more lives are lost.

One last thing, Mr. Chairperson, I understand the Russian Security Council is discussing now the possible recognition by the Kremlin of the non-government controlled areas of eastern Ukraine. This would not only be a complete repudiation of the Minsk agreements, which my Russian colleague has just spent a long time discussing, but, indeed, of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. If carried out, this would again result in the upending of the rules based international order, under the threat of force. This, dear colleagues, is deplorable, and, as the EU Ambassador said, condemnable. And should be, by all of us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



1356th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1356, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Thank you Mr. Chairperson for convening this special Permanent Council meeting today. And thank you to Chief Monitor Çevik and Special Representative Kinnunen for their updates. We remain strong supporters of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) and its impartial approach as the international community's eyes and ears on the ground. We are also grateful for the valuable role of the Trilateral Contact Group in supporting the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We are entering an increasingly dangerous period. Russia military build-up in and around Ukraine is the largest deployment on the European continent since the end of the Cold War. This is not just "unusual". It is threatening and dangerous to Ukraine, and a challenge to global security and the international order.

Rather than act on its stated commitment to dialogue, Russia is instead showing contempt for the OSCE commitments it has freely signed up to.

It has boycotted every meeting that Ukraine has called under Chapter III of the Vienna Document. Extraordinarily, given the context I have just set out, it is Russia that has accused Ukraine of provocation. Every step of the way, Russia has obfuscated, distracted and delayed.

This is in stark contrast to the approach taken by Ukraine. In the face of highly provocative actions by Russia, Ukraine has made massive diplomatic efforts to reduce tension. Ukraine has continued to engage constructively in the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. Ukraine repeatedly continues to ensure the SMM's ability to monitor in government-controlled areas, unlike Russia's proxies who systematically attempt to restrict the Mission's movement.

Here in Vienna, Ukraine has welcomed the Polish Chairmanship's initiative to hold the Renewed European Security Dialogue. Ukraine has welcomed the early warning issued by the OSCE Secretary General and expressed readiness to consider further OSCE action to reduce tensions. Ukraine has used the OSCE Vienna Document processes to share its concerns and given Russia the opportunity to answer questions on its unusual military activity.

If the Kremlin is serious about a diplomatic resolution then it needs to engage properly and commit to meaningful talks at the OSCE.

Mr. Chairperson, we share the deep concern expressed by Chairperson-in-Office Rau and Secretary General Schmid about the significant increase in armed violence in eastern Ukraine. In its 18 February report, the SMM reported almost 900 ceasefire violations, including over 600 explosions. On 19 February this figure had risen to over 1,500 ceasefire violations, the overwhelming majority of which were explosions. We condemn the use of heavy weaponry and indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, which constitute a clear violation of the Minsk agreements.

We note that the vast majority of weapons in violation of withdrawal lines observed by the SMM are in non-government controlled areas and that the Mission reported a significant increase in the number of heavy weapons observed in training camps belonging to Russia-backed armed formations in November and December compared to September and October.

We welcome the efforts of Ambassador Kinnunen to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group and in effort to address this worrying escalation. We regret that Russia and its proxies chose again to boycott.

We must ask ourselves why? Why, if separatist leaders fear for their security will they not engage in dialogue? Why, if Russia believes Ukraine is preparing for an offensive will it not engage in dialogue?

Because they do not want transparency. They do not want to engage in risk reduction. Instead, they want to continue to wage a disinformation campaign intended to destabilize and create a false pretext for an invasion of Ukraine.

We need look only at the measures taken on 18 February by the self-proclaimed “People’s Republics”. Separatist leaders claimed they were facing an imminent attack from Ukraine. They took to the airwaves to order “emergency” evacuations. But independent experts from multiple countries have since confirmed that metadata attached to the videos prove they were recorded on 16 February.

The United Kingdom and its partners have identified more than 70 different such “provocation” stories disseminated by Russian State-controlled sources since the beginning of February. The amount of disinformation these sources pump out has doubled in the last week alone. We must all collectively remain alert and exercise extreme caution regarding any such reporting in the coming days.

Mr. Chairperson, the United Kingdom underlines its continued support for Germany’s and France’s efforts through the Normandy process to secure the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We welcome public statements by President Zelenskyy underlining Ukraine’s firm commitment to the Minsk agreements and his readiness to contribute constructively to the process.

We call on Russia to seize the opportunity which Ukraine’s proposals represent for the diplomatic path. We also call again for Russia to engage seriously with the Renewed

European Security Dialogue, and the offers of talks in the NATO-Russia Council and the United States-Russia Strategic Stability Dialogue.

Russia should be in no doubt that if it chooses an alternative path of further military aggression against Ukraine, there will be massive consequences, including financial and economic sanctions on a wide array of sectoral and individual targets that would impose severe and unprecedented costs on the Russian economy. As G7 Foreign Ministers made clear on 18 February, we will take co-ordinated restrictive measures in case of such an event.

Mr. Chairperson, Russia still has a choice. It can disregard the UN Charter and Helsinki Final Act, and face the bloody economic and political costs of waging a war against Ukraine. Or it can choose to match its words with actions, withdraw its troops, engage in meaningful talks and act in the best interests of peace, security and stability in Europe. We urge it to take the path of dialogue and diplomacy.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are following the latest developments in the Donbas region of Ukraine with great concern. To resolve this issue, which endangers international security beyond the region, all sides need to act with moderation and sense of responsibility. Diplomacy should urgently be activated.

We underline our unwavering support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including Crimea and its territorial waters. Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and political unity, in line with the OSCE commitments and international law must be respected.

We are grateful for the comprehensive presentations of Ambassador Çevik and Ambassador Kinnunen. The observations of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) regarding the dramatic increase in kinetic activity along the contact line in eastern Ukraine is concerning.

We are in a critical juncture that every step should be taken by utmost care. We must be all vigilant regarding reckless disinformation campaigns that could easily deteriorate the circumstances.

We fully concur with the recent calls of the Chairperson-in-Office and the Secretary General that emphasized the need to refrain from the use of force and to de-escalate an already tense situation. It is high time to act in restraint. Dialogue channels should be kept open. We must all continue to focus on diplomacy and act with prudence.

Despite this fact, we regret to learn that some participants of the Trilateral Contact Group linked their attendance to the extraordinary meeting on 19 February to certain political preconditions.

Minsk agreements should be fully implemented. Other choices will lead to devastating consequences for the entire OSCE area. Unfortunately, the highest price is already being paid by the innocent civilians.

My country will continue to engage in and constructively contribute to all diplomatic efforts. We also continue our bilateral talks and contacts with all relevant sides at all levels and in every occasion available.

Let's use the OSCE as a platform for more dialogue and consultations, including Renewed European Security Dialogue process initiated by the Chairmanship alongside with actively utilizing all relevant confidence- and security-building mechanisms.

Mr. Chairperson,

When we first established the SMM by consensus, our main goal was to reduce tensions and foster peace, stability and security, as expressed in Permanent Council Decision No. 1117. That goal is more valid today and to urgently attain it is more vital.

Therefore, we – one more time – underline our unwavering support to the SMM which conducts its work impartially and transparently. Particularly these days – under the current circumstances – the SMM's presence in Ukraine is crucial to objectively report the facts on the ground. As we all often remind: facts matter. Therefore, we should keep the SMM and its monitors out of harm's way.

I kindly ask, Mr. Chairperson, this statement to be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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Annex 9

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1356th Plenary Meeting
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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ICELAND**

Mr. Chairperson,

Although Iceland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, I have asked for the floor to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Today's meeting is taking place against the backdrop of an extremely worrying situation in and around Ukraine.

Despite repeated international calls for de-escalation and vigorous attempts to pursue avenues for diplomacy and political dialogue, the situation in eastern Ukraine only keeps deteriorating. The latest news from Belarus is especially troubling.

Our joint OSCE commitments reflect our obligations under international law and remain fundamental to the very security of our region.

Through its significant military build-up, its refusal so far to engage in dialogue and apply transparency measures in line with the provisions of the Vienna Document, and its undermining of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Russia is striking at the very foundations upon which our Organization is built, and which the European security order relies on. We call on Russia to immediately abandon this dangerous course.

Ordinary citizens who yearn for peace deserve to be spared from violence and war, and from the threats of violence and war. Sadly, these evils have become a daily reality for all too many.

We further reiterate our call for the full and swift implementation of the Minsk agreements and underline our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Chairperson,

As has been said so often over the past few days, the door for diplomacy and dialogue must remain open. A peaceful resolution of this situation is the only acceptable way forward.

Thank you.

I kindly ask that my statement be attached to the journal of the day.



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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF FRANCE (ALSO ON BEHALF OF GERMANY)**

While aligning itself with the statement made by the European Union, France wishes to underline, also on behalf of Germany, the following points.

The increase in ceasefire violations along the line of contact in recent days is of high concern. We condemn the use of heavy weaponry and indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, which constitute clear violations of the Minsk agreements.

We continue to express our grave concern about Russia's massive build-up of armed forces in and around Ukraine and call on Russia to contribute to de-escalation by a substantial withdrawal of military forces from the proximity of Ukraine's borders. Following the announcement by the Russian authorities that some of its troops currently deployed on the borders of Ukraine and in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula would return to their home bases, Russia has yet to take convincing and tangible steps in this regard. Yesterday's announcement by the Belarusian authorities that joint military exercises with Russia would last longer than originally planned sends a contradictory signal. We will continue to closely monitor developments on the ground.

We have noted the announcement of the leaders of the self-proclaimed "People's Republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk to evacuate the region's residents to Russia as a so-called precautionary measure in anticipation of a possible Ukrainian attack. We do not see any grounds for these allegations and urge Russia to use its influence over the self-proclaimed republics to encourage restraint and contribute to de-escalation.

We are concerned that staged incidents could be used as a pretext for possible military escalation.

In the current situation, it is crucial to obtain objective information on developments on the ground. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) plays a key role in the de-escalation efforts as the eyes and ears of the international community. France and Germany will maintain their seconded SMM personnel on the ground to ensure that the Mission remains operational at this critical time. We reiterate the need to ensure free, safe, secure and unhindered access to the Mission throughout Ukraine. France and Germany are fully engaged to remind Russia of its responsibility in this respect.

We welcome the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office's Special Representative, Ambassador Kinnunen, various attempts to convene extraordinary sessions of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) in order to defuse tensions and to address the current situation. We call on Russia and the de facto representatives of the self-proclaimed republics to accept such a meeting in the upcoming days in order to contribute to de-escalation.

France and Germany reaffirm their unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters. Our two countries are continuing their efforts, within the Normandy format, to fully implement the Minsk agreements. We appreciate the commitments made by the Ukrainian authorities to submit draft texts to the TCG on the legislation required by the Minsk agreements. This would be a constructive contribution by Ukraine to move things forward. We call on Russia to engage constructively and to fulfil all its commitments, including on humanitarian and security issues, to progress toward the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We commend the Polish Chairmanship for its commitment in this context and in particular for launching a new process of dialogue and negotiation within the OSCE, the Renewed European Security Dialogue. We strongly support these measures and we will be active participants in this process. We call on Russia to make full use of the provisions of the Vienna Document and to invite observers from participating States to relevant sites and actions in this respect.

We expect Russia to contribute to these discussions in a constructive and responsible spirit, both in the Normandy format and in the TCG. We also call on Russia to make greater use of the influence it has over de facto representatives of areas not controlled by the Ukrainian Government.

Beyond the conflict in eastern Ukraine, France and Germany are fully mobilized to allow the dialogue on security in Europe to continue. On the proposal of the President of the French Republic, and on the condition that Russia does not commit any aggression against Ukraine in the meantime, Presidents Biden and Putin have each accepted the principle of a summit of Heads of State, bilaterally and then with all stakeholders, on security and strategic stability in Europe. Its content will be prepared by Secretary of State Blinken and Minister Lavrov during their meeting on Thursday, 24 February.

Be assured that the commitment of France and Germany will not falter.

Mr. Chairperson, I would like to ask you to attach our joint statement to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF LATVIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank Ambassadors Çevik and Kinnunen for their briefings today.

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, but allow me to add some remarks in my national capacity.

We thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for convening this special meeting of the Permanent Council at Ukraine's request. We express our full support for all the efforts by the Polish OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretary General to find a rules-based solution to the current security crisis. We reaffirm our endorsement of the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and reiterate the importance of ensuring that the Mission receives all the necessary support to be able to fulfil its mandate, including unimpeded access throughout Ukraine's territory.

My delegation wishes once again to express its strong and unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We urge the Russian Federation to de-escalate the situation and use all possible diplomatic means, including the tools available at the OSCE, to settle any issues peacefully. For it is obvious that only one side is creating and stoking conflict.

We can currently see how the Russian Federation is not only not withdrawing its forces from the Ukrainian border, but in addition is keeping a significant number of its troops in Belarus near that country's own border with Ukraine. That is an unprovoked threat to the peace and security of Ukraine and, indeed, of the whole OSCE area.

Reacting to the largest concentration of troops in Europe since the Cold War is not a sign of "hysteria", as the Russian Federation and Belarus claim, because the fact is that, just as in the days of the Soviet Union, Russia is once again planning to extend its borders to some European States which have not been its immediate neighbours for quite a while.

What really must be deemed hysteria is the decision to station 190,000 troops in Russian and in Belarusian territory in close proximity to Ukraine's borders and to its temporarily occupied territories.

Hysteria is the dissemination of disinformation that is extremely easy to unmask by means of artificial intelligence and by applying simple critical thinking. Hysteria is the staging of false flag operations and engagement in acts of provocation. Hysteria is the evacuation of people from a territory that Russia is itself occupying, in the absence of any real threat other than that emanating from Russia itself.

The Russian Federation is the largest country in the world.

Imagine for one moment what it would be like if all the human, financial and intellectual resources currently invested by the Russian Federation in threatening and occupying other countries, preparing and spreading disinformation, reacting to the devastating effects of foreign sanctions and amassing troops at yet another country's border were to be channelled into its domestic development as a prosperous State at peace with the rest of the world? What a superpower Russia could then become, benefiting Russia itself and its people first and foremost.

Instead of mourning the past, Russia and Belarus should put it behind, leaving it to the history books while assimilating all the hard lessons regarding the terrible devastation that a misguided sense of supremacy can bring; they should look ahead and seek to build a better future for each and every one of their residents, and let other independent and sovereign States and their peoples do the same. That would benefit all of us.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing more important and precious than peace and the safeguarding of human life.

We once again urge the Russian Federation to de-escalate the situation and engage in constructive consultations. We likewise call on Russia and Belarus to implement the recommendations that the vast majority of the OSCE participating States raised at the two meetings held last week, namely on 16 and 18 February, which were convened in accordance with the provisions of the Vienna Document.

Latvia expresses once again its strong and unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I kindly ask that my statement be attached to the journal of the day.



1356th Plenary Meeting
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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF LITHUANIA**

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Allow me, though, to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

At the same time as thanking the OSCE Chairmanship for convening this special meeting of the Permanent Council today, I wish to emphasize that we, the OSCE participating States, should spare no effort to prevent further military escalation, which could lead to a full-scale aggression by Russia against Ukraine. We should be ready to work day and night to make sure that diplomacy prevails over military action.

We note that the delegation of the Russian Federation is taking part in today's meeting. Allow me to reiterate that it was Russia which instigated the conflict with Ukraine – Russia is a party to this conflict and not a mediator, and it has undertaken a number of commitments that must be implemented if the conflict is to be resolved.

Like many other participating States, Lithuania is gravely concerned about the continuous unusual and unprecedented concentration of Russian military forces close to the Ukrainian border, in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula, in the Black Sea and in Belarus.

Despite Russia's statements about the withdrawal of its troops, we are seeing the opposite: the number of troops in border areas is increasing, acts of provocation and related disinformation activities are intensifying.

We again call on the Russian Federation to immediately return its troops to their normal peacetime locations, and to engage in meaningful dialogue – be it within the Trilateral Contact Group or the Normandy format, or at OSCE meetings, including meetings convened under the risk reduction mechanism provided for by the Vienna Document.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine entered its ninth year yesterday. Its unprecedented aggressive military posture around the Ukrainian border and in the occupied parts of Ukraine is in blatant violation of a number of OSCE principles, as are its extremely hostile rhetoric and impositions aimed at curtailing Ukraine's sovereign decisions with regard to its foreign and security policy orientation. Russia's demands vis-à-vis Ukraine stand in stark contradiction with the consensual agreement regarding the right of every OSCE participating State to choose freely its own security arrangements.

Yesterday, it became clear that the Russian troops are not going to leave the territory of Belarus, as had been announced initially. In our view, the joint military exercise by Russia and Belarus is part of a broader strategy by Russia to increase pressure on Ukraine and the West. The statements by Belarus to the effect that the troops involved in the joint exercise could be used against Ukraine and the NATO Allies are very disturbing. We continue calling on Russia and Belarus to use all the available tools to increase military transparency and reduce tensions.

In closing, I wish once again to express my country's unwavering support for and commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Only the people of Ukraine can decide on the future of their country and its domestic, foreign and security policy.

Mr. Chairperson, I would kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.