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Delegation of Canada

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA AT THE 1375th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 May 2022

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Canada welcomes Ambassador Villadsen to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his presentation.

We appreciate your commitment to ensuring that the Office continues to carry out its activities and play an important role in supporting local partners and communities in Ukraine, even under the most difficult circumstances. Canada commends you for your invaluable work and we strongly support the continuation of your mandate in Ukraine. The Office's long-term presence on the ground and the relationships and expertise that it has developed over the past 23 years are a valuable asset and an important resource for the OSCE – now and in the future, when Ukraine can begin its reconstruction.

Canada applauds the hard work of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU) in supporting the development of a vibrant civil society in Ukraine, which is an essential component of democratization and good governance. Gender equality, freedom of the media, open dialogue and civic participation are fundamental to the protection of human rights and to peace and security. Now more than ever, as we bear witness to the dangerous consequences of internal repression, these values are crucial to ensure peace and security in the region.

We also welcome the flexibility and adaptability shown by the PCU in the face of the disruption caused by Russia's war against Ukraine. Canada supports the PCU in its efforts to deal with the immediate consequences of the conflict.

We reiterate here that, contrary to what we have just heard, this conflict is an illegal war by Russia against Ukraine.

Mine action, the prevention of trafficking in human beings and psychological support for victims are needs that will only increase, and the PCU is well placed to take a leading role in this regard. The wide range of activities carried out by the PCU and the extent of its engagement with the local population could not be a better embodiment of the comprehensive approach to security advocated by the OSCE.

Canada sincerely hopes that all participating States will support the extension of the Office's mandate. The PCU is a key investment for the OSCE and it is essential for it to be able to continue its important work as needs intensify.

We call on Russia to cease its aggression, act in good faith and refrain from politicizing the extension of the PCU's mandate.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.