

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
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FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION AND THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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**In response to the presentation by the former Prime Minister of Ireland,
Mr. Bertie Ahern**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome Mr. Bertie Ahern and thank him for his interesting talking points.

Your presentation on the history of the Northern Ireland settlement serves as an additional confirmation that it is only through a painstaking and mutually respectful negotiation process that a long-term solution to conflicts can be found.

Indeed, it was the elaboration of a package of agreements, known as the “Good Friday Agreement” or the “Belfast Agreement” of 10 April 1998, which provided for the creation of legislative and executive bodies in Ulster, that seriously accelerated the Northern Ireland settlement process. Simultaneous referendums were held in Ireland and Northern Ireland in May 1998 in support of the agreement. The outcomes of those referendums allowed politicians to start implementing the agreed measures based on the firmly expressed opinion of the people. It is indicative that despite the persistent long-term efforts of all the participants in the Northern Ireland settlement process, divisions remain over a number of issues. One such division is the question of guarantees for the status of the Irish language in Ulster. A new factor was the outcome of the referendum on the issue of the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit), in respect of which, as we understand, the largest parties in Northern Ireland took opposite positions.

Irish experience once again shows that crisis management is impossible without taking into account the parties’ interests. Of course, such a dialogue can and should be inclusive, and the aspirations of the residents of the affected regions, expressed through their representatives, should not be subject to speculation. Otherwise, the very viability of such a settlement is called into question. In the words of George Bernard Shaw, “where there is no will, there is no way.”

There are direct analogies with current events in Europe, primarily with the internal Ukrainian crisis, where the Ukrainian Government has been avoiding direct dialogue with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk for five years now. I recall that the need for such a dialogue is one of the key provisions of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015, endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202. That document was signed by the Ukrainian Government and by the representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and is the only internationally recognized framework for a peaceful, political and diplomatic settlement of the crisis in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, the Ukrainian Government's tactics to put the whole process on ice are more clearly visible. Four years after its signing, not a single point of the Minsk Package of Measures has been properly implemented. Furthermore, the Ukrainian "war party" literally strikes down any initiatives proposed by public groups and associations that advocate dialogue with Donbas. Those who speak out in favour of such a dialogue face criminal prosecution for treason and separatism.

Against this background, the leadership of Ukraine is clearly not ruling out solving the Donbas problem by force and is making the appropriate military preparations. We call on our Western partners to use all their influence on the Ukrainian Government to encourage it to begin real steps towards de-escalation and a resolution of the crisis within the country.

Mr. Chairperson,

The 2012 Irish OSCE Chairmanship left behind a serious legacy in terms of the Transdniestrian settlement. The "Principles and Procedures for the Conduct of Negotiations" and the agenda for the negotiating process agreed upon at that time in the "5+2" format remain fundamental in terms of organizing the dialogue between the Government of Moldova and the authorities of Tiraspol with the participation of mediators and observers. Russia, as one of the guarantors of the agreements reached, will continue to assist the parties in finding acceptable options for a sustainable resolution of the Transdniestrian problem.

We are counting on qualitative progress in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We will continue, in co-ordination with the other Co-Chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group (France and the United States of America), to assist the parties involved in negotiating an agreement that suits them, with the parties completely refusing to use or threaten to use force.

We are interested in the productive work of the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus, Rudolf Michalka, in building an equal dialogue involving all participants in the Geneva International Discussions in order to achieve security and stability in that region.

The development of the situation in Kosovo requires greater attention from the OSCE. The current authorities in Priština are not ready to abandon their maximalist radical demands in the dialogue with the Serbian Government, which has led to an impasse in negotiations with the complete impotence of Kosovo's Western patrons.

Ireland's experience proves that it is possible to successfully overcome the most difficult and drawn-out conflicts by persistently searching for compromises that are acceptable to the parties involved. This approach guided Russia in proposing in 2009 a draft

Ministerial Council decision on conflict prevention and crisis management in the OSCE area based on the principles of consensus, supremacy of international law, peaceful resolution of conflicts through negotiations within the existing formats, the inadmissibility of the use of force, and the consent of the parties to the conflict to measures proposed by the OSCE. The approaches we proposed to support the Organization's activities in conflict resolution were subsequently enshrined in the Ministerial Council decision in Vilnius in 2011 on the conflict cycle and remain relevant to this day.

Thank you for your attention.