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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RÜDIGER LÜDEKING,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF  
GERMANY TO THE OSCE, AT THE 748th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

12 March 2014

Mr. Chairperson,

I thank our Hungarian colleague for the report on the visit under paragraph 18 of the Vienna Document. A central finding of this report is that at the checkpoints to Crimea the group observed military equipment, which unequivocally points to the presence of Russian armed forces.

The fact that at the checkpoints the group operating under the Vienna Document was refused entry at gunpoint to Ukrainian territory in Crimea is unacceptable. This is a blatant violation of Vienna Document provisions and of basic rules of international law.

Russia has not used its influence on the forces, to which it is quite clearly providing military support, namely in the form of personnel and *matériel*, to enable the visit to Crimea to take place. The goal of the visit was to make an impartial evaluation of military activities in Crimea. Refusing to allow access to Crimea strengthens the impression that something is being hidden here. This is the exact opposite of confidence-building. The specious claims made public by Russia regarding the military activities in Crimea are thus even less credible.

It is regrettable that an opportunity was wasted here to give substance and effect to the goals of the Vienna Document, namely to achieve progress in strengthening confidence and security. It is a question here of observing the central commitment that we adhere to in the OSCE, the commitment to co-operation.

The Vienna Document is not just a fair-weather document; it must also be effective in crises, and it is precisely under such circumstances that it requires a co-operative spirit. The toolkit of confidence- and security-building measures is a key achievement of the OSCE. This should not be jeopardized.

Furthermore, we received reports yesterday about a Russian airborne exercise involving “up to 4,000 troops”. This raises questions. If this exercise involving over 3,000 troops is being conducted in the zone of application of the Vienna Document, notification would have to be provided under paragraph 40.2.1 of the Vienna Document. If it

involves more than 3,500 troops and lasts longer than 72 hours, it is subject to observation under paragraph 47.4 of the Vienna Document.

Regardless of whether the Vienna Document is of relevance here (there is evidence that parts of the exercise are taking place outside the zone of application), such exercises intensify concern and make no contribution whatsoever to de-escalation and confidence-building. The obligation of confidence-building goes beyond the Vienna Document.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.