

**Opening Statement**  
**by Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya, Deputy Minister**  
**for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Head of the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**  
*(Warsaw, 10 September 2018)*

**Mrs. Chairperson,**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The delegation of Ukraine would like to acknowledge the efforts of the OSCE Italian Chairmanship and the ODIHR in organizing this Meeting. We also appreciate the efforts of the host country - Poland - in making our stay pleasant and effective.

**Distinguished participants,**

At the outset I wish to point out that the seat next to me, that's the seat of Turkey, is vacant. Without contemplating on the reasons that prevented the presence of this delegation I wonder if enough was done to address in a timely manner the concerns of this important participating State and a good neighbor and partner of Ukraine. On the other hand, the state that violated every single principle of the Helsinki Final Act Decalogue, launched an armed aggression against a neighboring state, left more than ten thousand of people killed and wounded in the last four years, continues to shell Ukrainians on the Ukrainian land every single day is sitting at the table and continues to promote its false narratives and alternative facts. Whereas Russian aggression against Ukraine continues inflicting gross human rights violations upon the population in the occupied territories, last August marked the 10 years of Russia's war against Georgia which also resulted in massive violations of OSCE norms and principles that remain uncorrected. My question is whether the OSCE Institutions and we all participating States did enough and were effective enough to bring the perpetrator to account and to relieve the plight of the people affected by Russian aggression. These matters must lay at the core of our work in the human dimension. We must not allow the human dimension events to be abused by the aggressor state for the purposes of legitimization of the aggression and illegal occupation.

**Dear colleagues,**

To our great disappointment, the OSCE conflict prevention mechanism failed to avert and stop military aggression, occupation and attempted annexation of a part of territory of one participating State by another participating State. Nevertheless, for my country the OSCE remains a particularly useful organization.

We highly value the role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. With all the restrictions imposed by Russia and its proxies, it remains the only real monitor in the territory of the occupied Donbas observing and documenting the abhorrent human rights violations taking place there.

**Distinguished delegates,**

We express our grave concern about the health condition of Ukrainian citizen Oleg Sentsov, who has been on hunger strike since 14 May 2018 in his cell in a remote penal colony in northern Russia. He is currently serving a 20-years prison term on utterly fabricated charges of terrorism. Oleg was forced to resort to this extreme form of protest not for his own freedom, but for the freedom of all Ukrainian citizens detained or imprisoned on spurious accusations related to Russia's ongoing hybrid war in Ukraine. Today is 120's day of Oleg's hunger strike.

We call on the OSCE institutions to use all possibilities to secure the immediate release of the illegally detained Ukrainian citizens – political prisoners in Russia, including Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Stanislav Klykh, Mykola Karpyuk, Roman Sushchenko, Pavlo Gryb as well as Volodymyr Balukh, Server Mustafaiev, Uzer Abdullaiev, Stanislav Aseev and others in the occupied Crimea and Donbas.

**Distinguished participants,**

The current threats to human dignity and security in the OSCE region, emanating from the gross breach by one participating State of the Helsinki Decalogue principles and commitments, have to be duly taken into account in our Organization's activities. The fundamental principles and values must not be sacrificed or compromised as it will generate only more uncertainty and instability for the future.

Dealing with many serious threats and challenges, including terrorism and migration crisis, cannot serve as an excuse for easing the efforts in countering the Russian aggression, which imperils the vision of Europe whole, free and at peace. We should seek further possibilities to strengthen OSCE human rights protection mechanisms to address these challenges.

In this context, we look forward to the Chairmanship's efforts to elaborate the relevant drafts of the Milan Ministerial deliverables in the human dimension.

In conclusion, let me note that the group therapy and counseling is important in treating addictions both in the case of drug addicts and abuses of human rights. However, when we deal with the violations that deserve attention of the International Criminal Court and are already examined by the Tribunal in the Hague, I am sure that we need to consider surgery when the criminals' ears remain deaf to the counsel.

**I thank you, Mrs. Chairperson.**