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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1044th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 March 2015

**On the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the
Minsk agreements**

Mr. Chairperson,

We note the significant progress made in the observance of the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of heavy weapons by the Ukrainian security forces and the Donetsk and Luhansk insurgents, although complaints continue to come from both sides. The parties are awaiting confirmation from the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) that the heavy weapons have in fact been withdrawn from the security zone to the stipulated distances.

Unfortunately, there are reports of skirmishes flaring up regularly near Donetsk airport and in the south of the Donetsk region. According to the SMM reports and information from the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC), tube artillery that was supposed to have been withdrawn continues to be used. Literally every day Donetsk airport is shelled between 20 and 40 times. We also note continuing firing in the vicinity of Shyrokyne. Civilian infrastructure continues to come under fire: on 9 March the Pervomaisk mine was shelled using a 120 mm mortar, equipment was damaged and the mine is at risk of flooding.

Mutual suspicion remains about the real willingness to implement the agreements reached in February. The insurgents are signalling that heavy weapons withdrawn earlier by the security forces are returning to their positions near the line of contact. Reports by the SMM confirm this. In particular, it is noted in the report dated 11 March that several self-propelled artillery systems that had been withdrawn earlier by the Ukrainian security forces then strangely “disappeared” from their storage sites.

Under these circumstances, the SMM should step up its monitoring and verification efforts, including regular daily reports assessing the parties’ observance of their commitments in accordance with the Minsk agreements of 12 February 2015. We call on both parties to provide the SMM with an opportunity to visit the sites where the withdrawn equipment is stored without hindrance. We note with concern that the SMM reports register a very high refusal rate on the part of the Ukrainian security forces to accommodate the monitors’

requests to visit these sites. The insurgents are co-operating much more effectively with the OSCE Mission. For some reason our Western partners, in particular the distinguished representative of the European Union, prefer not to notice this. This is a strange short-sightedness on their part.

Today, the Mission's main efforts should be focused on intensive patrolling and monitoring in the security zone. This zone should be completely cleared of heavy equipment. As far as we understand, the SMM patrols in the Luhansk region have not discovered any heavy weapons.

Russia and Germany have put forward an initiative to provide the SMM with an opportunity to increase its number of civilian monitors to 1,000. We also trust that in the near future the Mission will have a chance to make full use of additional technical equipment for the monitoring and verification of the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of heavy weapons, as stipulated in point 3 of the Minsk Package of Measures. It is also important to strengthen practical co-operation between the SMM and the JCCC, including information exchange.

We welcome the SMM's efforts to consolidate the local truces, which enable work to be carried out to restore infrastructure and clear areas of mines, as has been done in Kominternovo. A lasting ceasefire should be established across the entire territory of Donbas.

Mr. Chairperson,

Overall, we are compelled to note that despite some progress in the implementation of the "military" aspects of the Minsk Package of Measures, the next steps are in effect not being taken by the Kyiv authorities. Without this, it is impossible to implement the Minsk Package in full.

The political aspects of the settlement – a complete amnesty, preparations for municipal elections and the implementation of constitutional reform in Ukraine – are of particular significance. There will be no stability unless these problems are solved. Kyiv must co-operate with the Council of Europe on these matters. It is noteworthy that in his response to the report by the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, the Ukrainian representative made no mention of this.

It is essential that de-escalation involve not only a ceasefire and the withdrawal of equipment, but also the restoration of socio-economic ties and the resolution of humanitarian issues. The circulation of the hryvna must be re-established. These are all provisions of the Minsk agreements. Every day should be used to remove the consequences of the military operation and improve people's living conditions. These actions will work towards restoring trust among the opposing Ukrainian parties and creating a material basis for preserving the country's unity. Unfortunately, nothing is being done in this respect. We regard Kyiv's policy of further isolation of Donbas as destructive.

It is also necessary to intensify the work to provide the affected regions with humanitarian assistance and to develop the international mechanism envisaged in point 7 of the Package of Measures.

The deadline will be up very soon for the implementation of several other points in the Minsk agreements. In particular, an exchange of detainees should take place on the basis of the formula of “all for all”. As far as we are aware, the insurgents have drawn up the relevant lists and forwarded them to Kyiv.

In accordance with point 4 of the Package of Measures, a resolution of the Parliament of Ukraine specifying a list of areas of Donbas with special political and economic status should be adopted by 14 March, that is the day after tomorrow. We trust that it will be adopted on time.

We expect dialogue to begin as soon as possible with respect to the modalities of local elections in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and the Law of Ukraine on interim local self-government order in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and also with respect to the future regime of these areas based on the Ukrainian law, as stipulated in points 4 and 12 of the Package of Measures.

Instead, the Ukrainian Parliament has adopted a declaration stating that it will not co-operate with representatives of the self-proclaimed republics in organizing the local elections. We do not understand how this is consistent with the Minsk commitments, which mention co-operation between the parties in no uncertain terms.

In order to allay mutual suspicions, it is essential to begin setting up the relevant working groups within the Contact Group without delay to implement the “political package” of the Minsk agreements. Creating obstacles of a procedural nature is counter-productive. Unfortunately, everything points to the fact that Kyiv is endeavouring to hamper the work of the Contact Group itself, apparently also hoping to frustrate the political process, the key element of which is constitutional reform. Point 13 of the Minsk agreements of 12 February clearly states that the composition of the working groups should reflect the composition of the Contact Group. There is no mention of any additional conditions.

We once again stress that a sustainable settlement of the conflict on the principles that were confirmed in February in Minsk and supported by the leaders of Russia, Germany, France and Ukraine and also approved by a United Nations Security Council resolution is possible only by peaceful means. These opportunities also need to be used to implement the agreements reached in the prescribed manner.

Hawkish statements, which we frequently hear from some politicians in Kyiv, arguing that first Donbas needs to be liberated and only then can dialogue begin on constitutional reform, are a recipe for disaster and chaos. Our colleagues from across the ocean love to talk about the cost. Well, in this case the cost is growing – not only for the people of Ukraine but also for all of its neighbours.

Thank you for your attention.