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**STATEMENT BY
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE 1550th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 January 2026

On the ongoing attempts by some participating States to undermine efforts at finding a long-term and sustainable peaceful solution to the Ukrainian crisis

Mr. Chairperson,

I dare say none of us would dispute the fact that the OSCE is at a point of existential crisis. The European security system is falling to bits before our very eyes. Our continent, and together with it the entire world, is sliding towards a military catastrophe.

Are we to look on powerlessly and irresponsibly while this happens? Or can we summon the strength to deal with these challenges? And would it be possible to use the OSCE to that end, given that, after all, it was supposedly created for such purposes? As a responsible power, Russia considers it important to try to jointly find an answer to that question.

The first step in doing so is to honestly analyse the causes that gave rise to the crisis. At what point and why did the European security architecture start showing cracks? Without such reflection, we will not progress further and will merely continue to trade accusations.

However, instead of readiness for such an analysis, the logic of military escalation unfortunately has the upper hand in Europe at present. Since 2014, the European “war party” – which is heavily invested in the “anti-Russia” project that is being implemented in Ukraine and in the idea of inflicting a “strategic defeat” on Russia – has been striving to dismantle the mechanisms for interaction with our country. The ruling circles of most European countries are hyping up the “Russian threat” and stoking Russophobic and militaristic sentiment among the public. They are doing all this for no objective reasons whatsoever, no matter how much our European neighbours try to claim otherwise. What is more, over the past few years, Russia has made many attempts to return the situation to a civilized channel, specifically through numerous initiatives by our country to regularize the “rules of the game” within the framework of international treaties, security guarantees and so on. None of these proposals elicited a proper response in the West, which is what has ultimately led to the current security vacuum.

With regard to the Ukrainian crisis, it should be recalled that it did not emerge out of thin air, and that many opportunities were missed to avert it or at least to resolve it at an early stage. Europe had genuine chances to avoid escalation, but the logic of confrontation would invariably always prevail.

Let me remind you of how such an opportunity was missed in February 2014. Back then, with the mediation of European leaders, President Yanukovich and the opposition signed an agreement on a peaceful settlement, an agreement that provided for early elections and the eschewal of violence. However, just two days later, that agreement was grossly flouted following a coup d'état. Our appeals to the agreement's European guarantors to compel the opposition to honour their obligations were met with lame excuses about "unconventional forms of democracy". Europe thus ignored its duty as guarantor for the first time, in effect allowing power to be seized by force in an OSCE participating State.

The Minsk agreements of 2015 also offered a fairly good chance for peace. The signing of these documents, with the active involvement of Germany and France, kindled real hope that the conflict could be settled. France and Germany set themselves up as guarantors on that occasion too. However, as Ms. Merkel and Mr. Hollande themselves admitted later on, they had had no intention of implementing those agreements from the outset. The agreements reached were in fact merely a tactical pause to allow the Kyiv regime to rearm. Europe once again chose the path of confrontation, betraying trust and scuttling a road map for peace.

Finally, the last such opportunity was squandered in December 2021. Russia proposed to initiate an honest discussion and to conclude legally binding treaties on security guarantees in order to arrest the slide towards catastrophe. The response was an arrogant and categorical refusal to even so much as discuss our legitimate concerns about NATO's unbridled expansion. Western political elites once again demonstratively slammed the door on diplomacy.

The chronicle of these and other wasted opportunities vividly illustrates the consequences of systematically opting for a solution by force and for the derailment of peace initiatives. Every time it was necessary to display wisdom and insist on fulfilment of one's obligations, Europe turned the other way and succumbed to the logic of confrontation. We are now reaping the bitter harvest of that systematic pattern of escalation. The main question now is whether these painful lessons have finally sunk in. Are we ready today for genuine, as opposed to make-believe, dialogue based on consideration for the security interests of all without exception?

We suggest initiating such an honest conversation by analysing past mistakes and looking for ideas as to how to rectify the situation. The OSCE can still come into its own in this regard and revert to its original purpose as indicated in its name. To that end, it is necessary to urgently restore the quality of dialogue within the Organization. You should start with the following priority steps:

- Stop turning the OSCE platform into a soapbox for propaganda.
- Balance the agenda so that it reflects the concerns of all participating States, rather than being imposed by one group thereof.
- Bring back unconditional respect for the Rules of Procedure and the principle of consensus. The absence of objections is not a hindrance, not a "veto", as some would make consensus out to be, but, rather, the basis of the OSCE's work and the cornerstone of our Organization. Attempts to get round the consensus principle under the pretext of "political expediency" are all nails in the OSCE's coffin.

The extent to which we all manage to tackle these challenges together will determine whether our Organization will be able to make a positive contribution to de-escalation and to resolving complex European security issues, or whether it will choose to fade into ignominious political oblivion.

Thank you for your attention.