



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE  
at the 1561<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

**Agenda Item 3 “Review of Current Issues” - “40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chernobyl  
disaster” (raised by the delegation of Ukraine)**

**As delivered by Ambassador Yurii Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of  
Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna**

**(23 April 2026)**

**Mr Chair,  
Excellencies,**

On 26 April, we mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster – a tragedy that became a turning point in shaping global approaches to nuclear safety and international cooperation in this field.

First of all, I would like to thank the delegations of participating States for their participation in the side event held on 14 April at the OSCE, co-organized with France, Sweden and Japan. The information presented at the event clearly demonstrated the scale of the threats caused by Russia’s actions, as well as numerous facts evidencing Russia’s gross violations of nuclear and energy safety principles.

As we mark this anniversary, we are not only reflecting on the past, but above all addressing the present and the future – the challenges that directly affect the security of Europe and the wider OSCE region.

Today, the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant has once again found itself at the forefront of global security challenges – not due to a technical failure, but because of unprecedented external threats.

Forty years ago, “Chernobyl” became a global synonym for a technogenic catastrophe. It was a failure of technology and, at the same time, a failure of the closed political system of the Soviet Union, which concealed information about the scale of the tragedy. At that time, the world united to contain an invisible enemy – radiation. With international support, the New Safe Confinement was constructed to ensure that the legacy of 1986 would not threaten Europe again.

At the same time, the current situation is far more dangerous. While in 1986 it was an accident, since 2022 we have been dealing with deliberate criminal actions. This time, the threat is not the result of a technical flaw or human error. It is a deliberate and calculated strategy of nuclear terrorism carried out by the Russian Federation.

We are facing a fundamentally new type of threat – military actions around nuclear infrastructure that undermine established international norms and safety standards. The occupation of the Chornobyl Exclusion Zone, the seizure and militarization of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, as well as regular attacks on energy infrastructure, including facilities essential for the operation of nuclear power plants in Ukraine, create unprecedented risks to nuclear and radiation safety in the OSCE region.

Russia has turned nuclear facilities into an instrument of war.

Particular concern remains regarding the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which continues to be under Russian occupation. For the first time in history, a nuclear facility has been occupied during a full-scale war, significantly increasing risks for regional security as a whole.

Today, nuclear safety is no longer solely a technical issue. It has become an integral part of international security, and responding to these challenges requires coordinated action by the international community.

In this context, we can see a particular role of the OSCE. By addressing this emerging threat produced by Russia's war – namely, deliberate man-made disasters – the OSCE can make an important and practical contribution to energy security in the entire OSCE region.

Therefore, the delegation of Ukraine consistently advocates for the OSCE second dimension to pay close attention to Russia's deliberate use of man-made disasters as a weapon of war - the ongoing occupation of the Zaporizhzhia NPP since 2022, the destruction of the Kakhovka dam in 2023, the deliberate drone strike on the Chornobyl New Safe Confinement in 2025 as well as this year open winter terror against Ukraine's critical infrastructure.

We are convinced that it is not only a part of the OSCE's direct mandate to address the long-lasting and far-reaching repercussions of these appalling human acts. This is also in the interests of the OSCE community to make important lessons learnt for our common regional security as well as to ensure Russia's full accountability for these crimes. Strengthening the OSCE commitments in the field of natural and man-made disasters will be a timely step in this direction.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

The lessons of Chornobyl remain as relevant as ever. At the same time, Russia's actions pose real threats to nuclear safety and undermine international norms.

For this reason, it is essential to increase international pressure on Russia and to strengthen accountability mechanisms for violations of international law and nuclear safety principles. This includes ensuring an adequate international response to attacks against energy infrastructure. It also requires further strengthening of sanctions pressure, including with regard to the Russian nuclear sector and the State Atomic Energy Corporation *Rosatom*. It is important to develop effective tools for the prevention of and response to such threats.

Only coordinated action by the international community can ensure an adequate level of protection of nuclear facilities and restore confidence in the global security architecture.

Thank you.