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Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE

1149th FSC Plenary Meeting (14th October 2026)

Agenda Item 1, Security Dialogue

Code of Conduct: "Strengthening implementation and accountability mechanisms"

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the United Kingdom Chairpersonship for convening this Security Dialogue, and the distinguished panellists for their valuable contributions.

The OSCE Code of Conduct is not a ceremonial declaration.

Its true value is measured by whether its commitments are turned into orders, training, operational decisions and enforceable accountability.

The ultimate test of military professionalism is not what an armed force declares in peacetime, but how it conducts itself under the extreme pressure of war.

Ukraine is defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity against full-scale aggression conducted by Russia while simultaneously building military institutions capable of meeting the highest standards of international humanitarian law. Compliance cannot remain theoretical. It must be operational – integrated into planning, targeting, rules of engagement, the decisions of commanders and the daily preparation of every service member.

Paragraphs 29 to 31 of the Code require systematic instruction in international humanitarian law and make clear that both commanders and individual personnel bear personal responsibility for their actions. Paragraphs 34 to 36 reinforce the obligation to organise, train and direct armed forces in full accordance with international law. Neither military necessity nor technological change suspends these requirements.

Ukraine is putting these principles into practice.

In 2024 the Ministry of Defence, the General Staff and Ukrainian military education institutions, working with the United States Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, conducted specialised operational-law training for Armed Forces legal advisers. The course covered the law of armed conflict, rules of engagement, cyber operations and the legal support of combat operations. International humanitarian law has also been incorporated into the introductory adaptation course for new recruits.

We are grateful to the United Kingdom and other partners for their sustained support for Ukrainian military education. The UK-led multinational Operation INTERFLEX has trained more

than 63,000 Ukrainian personnel since 2022. This cooperation is an investment not only in combat capability, but in professional command, military discipline and interoperability with our partners.

Esteemed colleagues,

Today's battlefield includes unmanned systems, artificial-intelligence-assisted decision support, cyber operations and contested communications. These developments demand sharper legal judgement, not weaker legal standards. The core principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack must guide every decision, regardless of the platform used.

Education alone, however, is not accountability.

Allegations of violations must be recorded, evidence preserved, investigations conducted effectively and impartially, and individual responsibility – including command responsibility – rigorously examined. Lessons identified must be fed back into doctrine, training and operational procedures. A compliance framework that ends at the classroom door is not a functioning framework.

Ukraine therefore encourages this Forum to focus its follow-up work on practical results: scenario-based IHL training; sustained exchanges among operational commanders, military legal advisers and civilian oversight bodies; more effective use of the annual Code of Conduct Questionnaire; and voluntary peer review of investigation, civilian-harm assessment and lessons-learned procedures.

The Code must remain a living instrument. Its credibility depends on the actual conduct of participating States, consistent scrutiny, and the readiness to correct shortcomings.

Respect for the law is not a constraint on a professional armed force. It is one of the foundations of its effectiveness, its discipline and its legitimacy – especially when that force is fighting for the survival of its state and its people.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.