



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the delegation of Ukraine under the current issue
“Recommendations provided at the 81st joint special PC-FSC meeting
for stabilizing the situation and halting activities
of the Russian Federation that give rise to concern”**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1311st meeting of the Permanent Council
29 April 2021

Madam Chairperson,

As you are well aware, on 7 April 2021, Ukraine activated the risk reduction mechanism under Chapter 3 of the Vienna Document 2011 to dispel concerns posed by large-scale military build-up by the Russian Federation along the border with Ukraine and in the temporarily occupied Crimea.

The need to apply the OSCE politico-military tools to seek de-escalation and deter further deterioration of the situation was clear, having in mind the magnitude of the concentration of the Russian forces. It was unprecedented, amounting to 110 thousand troops armed with enormous numbers of weapons and military equipment in the areas concerned. These actions may be qualified as a threat of the use of force against a neighboring State.

The situation was also aggravated by a sharp escalation of violence in Donbas with rising numbers of armed provocations committed by the Russian occupation forces, rising death toll among Ukrainian defenders, as well as deployment of Minsk-proscribed weapons near the line of contact. It was also accompanied by aggressive rhetoric and massive disinformation campaign against Ukraine.

The reluctance of the Russian side to engage into meaningful dialogue and provide explanations on its military activity was speaking for itself. In contradiction to its commitments, Russia, as a party involved, refused to participate in the consultations held on 10 April, which engaged 39 participating States.

The consultations and joint PC-FSC meeting, convened on 14 April under the risk reduction mechanism, clearly demonstrated the high level of concern over Russia's dangerous activity by many delegations. We are grateful to the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship for prompt and professional organization of these meetings and reports upon their outcomes. We also thank participating States for proposing specific and practical recommendations, which, if implemented, would contribute to military transparency and regional stability.

All of the recommendations are worth due consideration. Meanwhile a number of them can be already fulfilled by the Russian Federation. In particular,

the Russian side can already take important steps to de-escalate the situation and engage in a meaningful dialogue and constructive consultations by providing a detailed briefing on its military activity and reversing deployment of additional weapons and military equipment near the border with Ukraine.

While we took note of the announcement of the Minister of Defence of Russia of the withdrawal of some troops from the border with Ukraine, we remain concerned of the security situation which is prone to further escalation. This assessment takes into consideration Russia's obstructive position in the negotiation formats under the Minsk agreements and escalation of hostilities in Donbas.

As was stated by the Foreign Minister of Ukraine, "we need to remember that this step would not put an end neither to the current escalation, nor to the conflict between Ukraine and Russia in general."

The question on the goals which Russia pursued by deploying its numerous forces equipped with some offensive weapons at the border with Ukraine in such excessive number of troops remains unanswered.

Moreover, according to the open sources, Russia intends to maintain a large number of weapons and military equipment at our borders under the pretext of preparation to "ZAPAD 2021" military exercise to be held in September this year.

The illegal military activities of the Russian side in the temporarily occupied Crimea fuel our concerns over the implications of such actions to security of Ukraine and other littoral states. They are exacerbated by illegal conscription campaigns, drastic increase in military force on the peninsula, including its territorial waters, and recent unlawful decision of Russia to close parts of the Black Sea for navigation.

The recommendations put forward during meaningful discussions at the joint PC-FSC meeting could serve as a basis for de-escalation of tensions with respect to Russia's military activities. Most of them remain valid and should be addressed by the Russian Federation in a constructive manner.

We raised this issue before the Permanent Council in line with the mentioned recommendations to give political impetus to further considerations of their implementation in relevant OSCE fora.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call upon the Russian Federation to withdraw its forces and military equipment from Ukraine and proceed with full de-occupation of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. These steps when taken remain the most efficient way to strengthen security and stability in the OSCE area by restoring full compliance with our agreed fundamental principles and commitments. They would also accommodate well within the aforementioned recommendations in respect of full implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.