



**Delegation of Ukraine
to the OSCE**

ENGLISH only

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
“OSCE Contribution to the Protection of National Minorities”
(Vienna, 29-30 October 2015)

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Delegation of Ukraine would like to commend the OSCE Chairmanship, ODIHR and HCNM for organizing this Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, and placing the topic of the protection of national minorities high on the agenda of the human dimension in 2015.

The Government of **Ukraine stays committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of all national minorities in Ukraine in line with OSCE commitments and international standards**, including the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Strengthening effective system of promotion and protection of rights of national minorities and indigenous peoples, as well as further supporting and promoting tolerant inter-ethnic relations in Ukrainian society **is among priorities of the National Human Rights Strategy of Ukraine, adopted in August 2015.**

The on-going reform on decentralization is expected to contribute to further enhancing the effective participation of all segments of the society regardless of their national identity in the public affairs of the country.

The overwhelming majority of **national minorities in Ukraine describe good inter-ethnic relations and voice strong support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.** This message was clearly voiced by the representatives of different communities throughout the country on numerous occasions, including during the meetings with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities earlier this year.

Distinguished participants,

We are convinced that **the High Commissioner on National Minorities, as a core OSCE conflict prevention instrument, has a great role to play** in addressing grave violations of human rights and national minorities’ rights resulting from the illegal occupation and annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation.

Independent findings testify that the indigenous population of **Crimean Tatars has been subjected to constant terror** and physical violence, including cases of killings, abductions and torture of activists, pressure on independent media and religious institutions. **The occupying authorities seek to eradicate all manifestations of the Ukrainian identity**, education and culture, and pursue the deliberate policy of forced russification.

We highly appreciate the important work carried out by the independent ODIHR/HCNM Human Rights Assessment Mission on Crimea, undertaken upon the request of the Government of Ukraine, which documented numerous compelling accounts of human rights violations in Crimea since its illegal occupation and annexation by Russia in 2014.

We deem it important that HCNM monitors the implementation by the Russian Federation as occupying authority exercising de-facto control in Crimea of recommendations contained in the Mission's Report to address the violations and ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms on the peninsula.

We recognise the **need of presentation of the Report at other international fora, including the UN and the Council of Europe**, which follow the human rights situation in the occupied Crimea with deep concern in the absence of full-scale monitoring on the ground.

We call on the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities **to continue paying priority attention and reacting on the grave situation with the national minorities' rights in the occupied Crimea**. It remains crucial for the OSCE, the UN and the Council of Europe to continue seeking access to the peninsula in line with the UN GA Resolution 68/262 "Territorial integrity of Ukraine".

Distinguished participants,

We are alarmed over the **negative developments with regard to rights and freedoms of persons, belonging to Ukrainian minority in the Russian Federation**, which is one of the largest ethnic communities in Russia.

The ongoing pressure and incitement of hatred through state-owned media pose a **serious threat to preserving and developing the national identity, cultural and linguistic needs of the Ukrainian community in Russia**.

We are appalled by the yesterday's **raid to the Library of Ukrainian Literature in Moscow by the Russian law-enforcement under the pretext of searching for "extremist" literature**. The Library is the only specialized state institution in Russia promoting Ukrainian culture and language. The Director of the Library Natalia Sharina was detained by police and interrogated.

On the same day, **the police searched an apartment of the co-chairman of the Association of Ukrainians in Russia, representative of the Ukrainian World Congress Mr. Valery Semenenko in Moscow** unfoundedly accusing him of disseminating “anti-Russian” materials.

This is not the first attempt by the Russian authorities to label all Ukrainian as "extremist". Such groundless and repressive actions of the Russian authorities testify yet again to the widespread aggressive policy of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

We encourage the **OSCE HCNM to give immediate attention to these worrying trends** and assist the Russian Federation to fully comply with relevant OSCE commitments on national minorities.

It is crucial that the High Commissioner is able to visit Russia at any time when considered necessary. We encourage the Russian Federation to extend a standing invitation to the HCNM.

Thank you for your attention.