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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR STEFANO BALDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY
TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1421st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 May 2023

**On the report by the mission of independent experts under the Moscow Mechanism
invoked by 45 OSCE participating States**

Mr. Chairperson,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and the statement by Finland on behalf of the 45 participating States that invoked the Moscow Mechanism on 30 March and would like to add some observations in a national capacity.

We should first like to thank the experts for the report presented today. As with the two previous independent expert missions under the Moscow Mechanism and the monitoring work of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, supported by Italy, your outstanding independent research and analytical work makes a further important contribution to the establishment of the atrocities committed during this senseless conflict and to the knowledge of the terrible suffering that the Ukrainian population continues to endure.

The report states that the forced transfer and deportation of children, in particular orphans and unaccompanied minors, from Ukraine to the Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by Russia and to the Russian Federation is an established and incontrovertible fact. The report's conclusions are equally clear: in most cases, such transfers represent a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and human rights by the Russian Federation and may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

It is therefore urgent and necessary for the Russian Federation to put an immediate end to this and proceed as soon as possible with identifying the deported Ukrainian children and returning them to their families, in co-operation with the competent Ukrainian authorities and, where necessary, with the support of the relevant international bodies.

The report also offers a worrying and extensive account of the rights violations suffered by deported Ukrainian children and the threats to their safety and psychophysical integrity. Of great concern are the procedures in use in the so-called filtration camps and the re-education programmes, including patriotic education and military training, to which Ukrainian children deported to recreational camps, institutions or foster families in Russia are subjected.

From the very start of this unjustified and unjustifiable war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, Italy has firmly supported international initiatives to establish violations of international humanitarian law and human rights and atrocities committed in Ukraine, and to identify and punish those responsible. The arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court in connection with the illegal deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children to the Russian Federation and the report of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine published in March are important first steps in this regard.

We hope that this third Moscow Mechanism report on the atrocities committed in Ukraine will contribute to maintaining international attention on these issues.

Thank you.