



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

FSC.DEL/146/17
19 May 2017

ENGLISH only

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 853^d FSC Plenary Meeting

(17 May 2017 at 10.00, Hofburg)

(Agenda item 1)

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished colleagues,

The Delegation of Ukraine aligns itself with the EU statement, which we fully support. In addition, we would like to make some remarks in the national capacity. The Delegation of Ukraine joins other delegations in warmly welcoming today's speakers and thanks them for their valuable contribution to the FSC discussion on the SALW-related issues.

Ukraine pays due attention to prevention illegal circulation of SALW as well as firearms. Ukrainian authorities coordinate their actions with clear understanding of additional risks in this area caused by so called hybrid warfare in the Donbas region of Ukraine. Illegal accumulations of SALW are mostly detected on the territories which are covered by combat actions since the beginning of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. All these cases of SALW illegal circulation are prosecuted criminally.

In this regard, we would like to reiterate Ukraine's consistent support for strengthened implementation of OSCE commitments in the area of SALW and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA) and conventional weapons, especially in view of the fact that the risks stemming from illicit large scale trafficking of conventional arms and ammunition have reached a new dimension, leading to tragic events such as those experienced in the Donbas region of Ukraine. In this connection, we would like to emphasize the importance of the relevant OSCE Hamburg Ministerial Declaration on the assistance projects in this field.

Since the very start of the armed aggression of Russia against Ukraine in 2014, the Delegation of Ukraine has been continuously drawing attention of the participating States to the issue of illegal arms transfers from the Russian Federation into the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea, as well as to the illegal armed formations operating as a part of the hybrid Russian forces in Donbas. Such illegal international transfers of military goods, including the most sophisticated weapons, as well as SALW from the Russian territory across the uncontrolled sections of the Ukraine-Russia state border fully contradict the arms transfer controls reporting instruments of the OSCE.

In the course of the last three years Ukraine has provided OSCE participating States in this Forum with strong evidence of the considerable Russian military presence in eastern Ukraine. Despite multiple requests by many delegations here in the FSC as well as in the PC, Russia has failed to provide explanations for the presence in Donbas of Russian sophisticated military equipment and other weapons, which had been registered or retrieved in areas controlled by the pro-Russian illegal armed groups.

There are sufficient evidence that those illegal transfers are continuing, undermining de-escalation in Donbas and impeding the implementation of the very first provisions of the Minsk agreements on comprehensive and sustainable cease-fire and the withdrawal of weapons. As the hostilities in Donbas continue to be sustained by Russia's logistical support and supplies, it remains imperative to seek permanent monitoring at the uncontrolled segment of the Ukraine-Russia state border.

At the same time, it is important to note that the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine hasn't detected any organized channels of SALW smuggling including those across the state border with EU member states.

We are working on the draft of joint Ukraine-OSCE project "Countering illegal circulation of arms, munitions and explosives at the state border" to improve national capabilities in this area including assistance in legislative regulations, support of actions to prevent illegal circulation, exchange of information and experience. All necessary steps are taken by the National Police of Ukraine. Since March 2017 the special international preventing operation under the auspices of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) started in Ukraine. During March 2017 continued monthly voluntary SALW surrender by civil population.

National Police has drafted a Law to strengthen the responsibility for illegal production of SALW and munitions. It is envisaged to amend some provisions of the Criminal Code of Ukraine including articles 201 on smuggling and others regarding the responsibility for theft, appropriation, blackmail, illegal displacement, keeping, transfer, sale or overhaul of arms, including firearms. The National Police of Ukraine confirms its readiness to information exchange with EU partners on SALW illegal circulation.

The evolution of the conflict in Donbas underlines the critical importance of firmly seeking that Russia restores its respect for international law and the OSCE fundamental principles and commitments it has violated, in particular, in the sphere of arms transfers and arms transfer controls.

This situation also highlights the need for dialogue on development of stringent arms transfer control instruments which would contribute to strengthening mutual confidence and preventing crisis situation associated with «hybrid warfare». Given the importance of these issues for peace and security in Europe, Ukraine is interested in taking them forward in the FSC discussions.

Thank you.