



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 845th FSC Plenary Meeting
(15 February 2017 at 10.00, Hofburg)
(Agenda item 1)

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes today's speakers and thanks them for their informative contributions on the topic of «***The Role of the Military Chaplains in the armed forces and the freedom of belief (in peace time or at war)***». We align ourselves with a Statement just made by EU delegation. Let me offer some remarks based on Ukraine's national experience.

From the first years of formation and development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine there was interaction between the forces and the church, which manifested itself in inclusion of clergy in military units that performed combat missions in peacekeeping operations, the regular invitation of priests to pastoral care for the military forces.

On 17 March 2009, by the Order of the Minister of Defence of Ukraine the Council of pastoral care was established, which included nine religious denominations: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kiev Patriarchate, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Evangelical Baptist Union of Ukraine, the Spiritual Administration of Ukrainian Muslims and others.

The Russian armed aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and military hostilities in Donbas sharply increased the relevance of spiritual support for the troops and pastoral care of military personnel.

Priests have been motivated to perform pastoral work in the area of Anti-terrorist operation. The procedure for admission of clergy to the Armed Forces units was developed in the General Staff. Priests, who were offered by churches and who successfully passed the basic course on the military-humanitarian, military-psychological training, were sent on a voluntary basis to selected military units. Funding of their work is covered by Church. The Armed Forces from their side provide accreditation to stay in the unit, means of individual protection and food.

The recent step in the introduction of the institute of military clergy was the approval of the Order of 14 December 2016 «On approval of the Chaplains' Service» by the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, which defines the

objectives, the activity order of the structural subdivisions of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of Ukraine for the organization of Chaplains` Service activity and the rights and obligations of chaplains. The next step is introduction of the positions of military priests (chaplains) in all military units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. This task should be completed by the end of this year.

In February 2017 the National Academy of Land Forces of Ukraine held in Lviv a two-week courses for 24 chaplains, representing different religious confessions. During the event, in particular, Canadian experience of the service of priests in the armed forces was studied.

In conclusion, we would underscore the intention of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to consolidate the institute of pastoral care in the service in Army.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.