

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1002nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 May 2014

Regarding the situation in Ukraine and the presidential elections

Mr. Chairperson,

I will talk about two issues at once – about the situation in Ukraine and about the presidential elections. In our view, separating them seems extremely artificial.

Great hopes are attached to the presidential elections that were held in Ukraine on 25 May. Additional possibilities are opening up for getting the country out of the protracted political crisis.

I should like to continue on a positive note. Unfortunately, however, immediately after voting finished the authorities in Kyiv gave the orders to step up the intensity of the punitive operation in the south-east. It should be pointed out that the President-elect Petro Poroshenko also supported this policy. There have been reports of many victims on both sides, and civilians and journalists are suffering. The death near Sloviansk of the Russian citizen Andrey Mironov and the Italian journalist Andrea Ronchelli requires thorough investigation.

Many representatives of the media, whom the Ukrainian authorities are not allowing to carry out their professional duty and objectively cover the real state of affairs in the country, are subject to persecution and threats to their lives. Everyone is aware of the scandalous incident involving the detention of journalists from the Russian television channel LifeNews and their ill-treatment at the hands of the Ukrainian security forces. We know of over 30 cases of Russian journalists being denied entry to Ukrainian territory or being deported under spurious pretexts. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, also draws attention to these facts in her report.

The situation surrounding the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission's observers in Donetsk province is extremely worrying for us. Moscow is seriously concerned about such incidents. Within our capabilities and powers the Russian Federation is taking the necessary measures to free the observers. In that connection, we should like to draw attention to the fact that Ukraine as the host country bears the main responsibility for the fate of the Mission's observers. It is good that the Verkhovna Rada has ratified the memorandum guaranteeing the

immunity of members of the international mission. The uncertainty regarding the status of the OSCE observers who have been working in Ukraine for more than two months posed a direct threat to their safety.

Let me return to the subject of the elections. We respect the results of the expression of will of the Ukrainian electorate in the presidential elections in Ukraine on 25 May. We are ready to engage in pragmatic dialogue on an equal basis with the new Ukrainian authorities. This should be based on the implementation of all existing agreements, including in the economic sphere. We intend to judge things not by statements but by real action. In this case, this can only refer to an internal Ukrainian settlement of the ongoing crisis. The international community, including Russia, will do all it can to assist in this.

We have seen the preliminary report by the International Election Observation Mission. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Ukrainian authorities made significant efforts to ensure that the elections were held “largely in line with international commitments”. There were, however, many problems with the election campaign. The elections were conducted against the backdrop of continuing military action in the east of the country. Cases of intimidation, beatings and arson attacks on the homes of some candidates were recorded. Russian-speaking candidates were prevented from conducting an election campaign. Therefore by no means all presidential candidates were able to go the full distance. We learned of some possible irregularities in the voting, for example ballot stuffing, from media reports, including those of the Ukrainian media, and via the Internet. The international observers made no mention of these cases in their report. Nevertheless, the result is convincing. It is the choice of the Ukrainians who came out to vote and ensured that the elections were conducted in one round.

We believe that task number one for the Kyiv authorities in the light of the presidential election results is immediate termination of the use of the army against the population as well as an end to any violence on all sides. Every day of military operations will only deepen the dividing line that has formed between Donetsk and Luhansk provinces on the one hand and the rest of Ukraine on the other. We hope that Mr. Poroschenko will do everything to prevent radical extremist sentiments from prevailing in Kyiv. For now, however, this is not happening. We see the inadmissible use of heavy armaments against the city of Donetsk with its million inhabitants. Dozens of civilian killings have been recorded.

We shall continue to advocate the implementation of the other provisions agreed upon in the Geneva statement, including the resumption of round tables and the transition to a truly comprehensive national dialogue in order to develop constitutional reform, reflecting the legitimate demands and concerns of all the regions of the country without exception and taking account of the interests of all political and ethno-religious groups in Ukraine. First and foremost, this concerns the population in the south-east of the country, primarily the inhabitants of Donetsk and Luhansk provinces. They are almost seven million people who essentially boycotted the presidential elections.

In this connection, we regard as very important the words of the Special Co-ordinator of the short-term OSCE observer mission, Mr. João Soares, who urged Kyiv and the regions to engage in dialogue and refrain from using the terms “separatists” and “terrorists”, which only exacerbates the situation and does not help to create the conditions for a frank and businesslike discussion about the country’s future.

Mr. Chairperson,

As for the unfounded insinuations that we have once again heard here suggesting that the Russian authorities are sending some kind of saboteurs to Ukraine, it is time for this emotional rhetoric to end. If there is evidence, present it. We shall not respond to baseless fabrications. Even the International Election Observation Mission refrained from such assertions.

We believe that it is now important to use the platform provided by the OSCE Permanent Council not for reciprocal accusations, which is all too easy, but for a joint search to find ways of de-escalating the Ukrainian crisis. There are a number of practical issues regarding the implementation of the Geneva agreements and the Swiss Chairmanship's road map as well as specific problems in Ukraine requiring our close attention and assistance.

If we understood Mr. Poroshenko's first statements correctly, he intends to ensure that there are no illegal armed formations on the territory of Ukraine. We expect these words to be put into practice, first and foremost, with respect to those armed formations which, in theory, should be under the control of the central authorities. I am referring to the various Maidan units, Right Sector divisions, the Dnieper, Donbas and Azov battalions and other similar structures.

It has been noted that the authorities have at last begun to clear the Maidan and liberate the buildings occupied by activists in the very centre of the capital. We are certain that this could have been done immediately after the signing of the Geneva statement on 17 April without waiting for the elections.

The road map and the Geneva statement also call for an amnesty for all protesters. One amnesty law was already adopted on 6 May 2014 by the Verkhovna Rada, but this was an amnesty for criminals on condition that they joined the National Guard. We would very much like respected international structures to establish to what degree this law is in conformity with high international standards. I might add that the law on the amnesty for Maidan participants was adopted in one day.

An open and just investigation of the events on the Kyiv Maidan as well as the tragedy in Odessa would undoubtedly make an important contribution to national reconciliation in Ukraine. For now it appears that the Ukrainian authorities are not co-operating with international organizations on this matter and the investigation is being conducted in secret.

In view of the huge repercussions of these crimes, in particular in Odessa, it is essential to ensure the transparency and independence of the investigation. If necessary experienced forensics and other experts who are able to help establish the truth should be called in. It would be useful to exploit the potential of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the light of the facts emerging that a toxic agent was used at Trade Union House in Odessa.

Russia has consistently supported the work of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. I have been instructed today to announce that the Government of the Russian Federation has decided to allocate up to 600,000 euros as a contribution to the Mission's budget. This money will be transferred using the appropriate bank details.

In conclusion, we once again underscore the need for the immediate cessation of the punitive military operation and the start of peaceful dialogue between Kyiv and the representatives of the regions. We hope that the new President of Ukraine will be able to do this.

Thank you for your attention.