



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement in response to the address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the North Macedonia, H.E. Dr. Bujar OSMANI

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1387th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

01 September 2022

Mr. Chairperson,

We join other delegations in warmly welcoming Minister of Foreign Affairs of the North Macedonia, H.E. Dr. Bujar Osmani to the Permanent Council.

We are grateful for your personal presentation of the priorities of the incoming Chairpersonship for 2023.

Mr Minister, your country is preparing to lead the OSCE in times of the unfolding crisis never faced by our Organization before.

The Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine launched in February has become a watershed for the OSCE. Russia has made a final step in exposing itself as the key threat to security and stability in the OSCE region and beyond.

This war of choice further provokes turbulence, instability, and enormous security challenges in all three OSCE dimensions. It requires hard work, leadership and determination to lead our Organization and defend the principles and values on which the OSCE is based.

Thus, we are glad to see that protection of the OSCE basics will be at the heart of the Chairpersonship's efforts to promote activities within the framework of our Organization. And this is precisely the true mission of the CIO as the guardian of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

Mr. Minister,

Russia's track record of undermining trust and confidence in the OSCE speaks for itself.

Over the course of the year, beginning in September 2021, disregarding the interests of the absolute majority of participating States, including the hosting country, Russia alone blocked mandates of the three respective OSCE field operations related to Ukraine.

Nor should we forget how Russia has ignored the OSCE's unique toolbox, including an early-warning mechanism, activated to respond to a looming war.

In addition, faced with an unprecedented Russian build-up on our borders, we had triggered the Vienna Document to reduce risks in Europe.

However, russia ignored this, culminating in a full-scale invasion. russia also rejected the dialogue on the European security, initiated in good faith by the Polish Chairpersonship.

In other words, russia has just ruined transparency, predictability and stability in the OSCE and challenged the foundations of the European security order.

This should be the bottom line for our understanding of how to address the three dimensions of the OSCE's comprehensive security concept.

And we have to answer quite simple questions. Can we have a common agenda, including on countering-terrorism, with a state, that not only supports and finances terrorism, but also engages in terrorist practices?

Or how do we fight with organized crime, when we know that the russian federation bears full responsibility for the increased security and humanitarian emergency, including its organized crime aspects?

Or how to jointly ensure the security of the borders, if they are broken by russia's tanks, planes, ships and soldiers who have come to kill your people? And not only in Ukraine, but also in Georgia.

Or how to improve cybersecurity, when the same participating state is using cyber tools to attack our critical infrastructure and disseminate disinformation in order to break our societies and democracies from inside?

Therefore, we must continue this-year practice of focusing attention on the root cause of the challenges facing the OSCE, namely russia's aggressive policy.

In the economic and environmental dimension, it is essential to address the timeliest topics which arise on the agenda.

It is noteworthy that issues such as energy security or environmental protection have acquired a new concrete meaning in terms of our common security.

Thousands of missiles launched by russia have polluted the soil, water and air and led to environmental degradation, thereby contributing to climate change. Weaponizing of supplies of energy resources emphasizes the urgency of improving the resilience of our economies.

At the same time, russia's seizure of the of the ZNPP and the blockade of Ukraine ports with dire consequences for global food security clearly demonstrate how russia's threat goes beyond the OSCE area. This underlines our responsibility before our partners in other regions to cope effectively with this spill-over.

The russian war is marked by an unprecedented assault on human life and dignity.

As a country facing complex humanitarian challenges, Ukraine calls on the incoming Chairpersonship to focus its priority attention and guide the OSCE Institutions to ensure that russia's gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are duly addressed.

Such illegal practices as filtration camps and forcible deportation of Ukrainian citizens to russia, violent russification of invaded territories, illegal passportization and imposition of the russian citizenship, as well as russia's attempts to dismantle the Ukrainian statehood, erase our culture and identity and to create puppet so-called "authorities" in the occupied territories of Ukraine, including through the illegal "referendums", are only a part of the key severe violations by the aggressor.

We also consider it a priority task to promote the activities of the OSCE, which will contribute to prevent impunity, ensure justice and hold to account all masterminds and perpetrators of the crimes of russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Following this year participation of the OSCE Secretary General in the Crimea Platform Summit and joining by the Polish CIO to a respective Declaration, we would expect, in particular, increased focus to the situation in Crimea, the Ukrainian peninsula temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation.

Mr. Minister,

The Russian language of ultimatums has nothing to do with a cooperative security promoted by our Organization. Russia's use of the OSCE platform to spread low-quality propaganda in order to justify military aggression against Ukraine only undermines the credibility, capacities, and mechanisms of our Organization. Blackmail, which has become a common practice of the Russian delegation long ago, is rather a sign of weakness than of strength.

If we want to preserve Europe whole, democratic and free, we need to stand up to Russian blackmail and aggression.

If we want to give Russia a new chance to be a partner for democracy and peace in the future, we need to do everything possible now so that Ukraine wins this war.

The OSCE needs to make a tough choice. Replication of old procedures and formal practices will not rebuild trust and confidence. In times when the future of the security order in Europe is at stake, resolute actions need to be taken.

Otherwise, by leaving everything as it is, Russia will only be allowed to ruin the Organization from inside. Avoiding difficult topics for the sake of consensus in this Organization would only further undermine the prospects for lasting security and stability in Europe.

It is time to find a long-term solution to the **Russian crisis** within the OSCE. The responsibility is on us.

Restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and territorial waters, remains critical in this regard, and not only for Ukraine but also for security, independence and prosperity of all participating States.

This is a ground base for restoring respect for the OSCE fundamental principles, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

And we are strongly convinced that the incoming Chairpersonship of the North Macedonia will lead us by example and serve as a dedicated guardian of the mentioned OSCE principles.

And, Mr Minister, please be reassured that participating States will stand firmly and staunchly by you and the North Macedonia in this extremely important endeavour.

This remains critical to uphold the OSCE's role in maintaining secure, stable and prosperous Europe.

You may count, Mr Minister, on Ukraine's full support in this regard.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.