



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine in response to the Report by  
Mr. Matteo Mecacci, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic  
Institutions and Human Rights**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1349<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,

16 December 2021

**Madam Chairperson,**

The Delegation of Ukraine welcomes back to the Permanent Council meeting Director Matteo Mecacci and thanks him for sharing his valuable ideas and observations on ODIHR's activities following his one year in office.

We reiterate our full support to the ODIHR's mandate. We appreciate the continuation of close cooperation between Ukraine and the ODIHR in 2021 in the areas of democracy and rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, tolerance and non-discrimination and take this opportunity to thank Director Mecacci for his productive visit to Kyiv earlier this year.

**Mr. Director,**

The Delegation of Ukraine fully shares your view expressed in your Report that "it is also important to be honest and frank about specific challenges in our region", as well as that "the fundamental principles of human rights that all OSCE countries have signed up to are not abstract ideals" as mentioned in your Statement on the occasion of the Human Rights Day.

In this regard let me express some thoughts on the protection of human rights in the OSCE region. Today in the Permanent Council, as well as during the last few days, on the occasion of the Human Rights Day, there were many statements on the topic. Indeed, it is difficult to overestimate its importance. At the same time, we often forget one crucial thing - human rights are not an abstract concept or phenomenon. To the contrary, human rights are concrete substantive rights of individual human beings. These are the rights of children, boys and girls, these are the rights of women and men, these are the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups in all their diversity, these are the rights of people living in conflict zones and in the occupied territories, as well as in countries where peace reigns.

If we all in the OSCE, including the ODIHR and other institutions, want to be truly effective, we must respond clearly and meaningfully to specific situations where the human rights of real people in the OSCE region are being systematically violated. The assessment of such situations should be prompt, unambiguous and public. Targeted and substantive response, concrete actions and steps that can help people whose rights are severely violated - these are the tools that should be used by the OSCE and its institutions. There is no place for silence when it comes to human rights protection!

**Dear colleagues,**

The situation in the temporarily occupied Crimea remains extremely worrying. According to the latest UN Secretary-General report there are cases of torture, illegal arrests, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, violations of the freedom of religion, expression, and peaceful assembly by the Russian occupation administration. Russia continues to blatantly violate international humanitarian law and illegally convict Ukrainian citizens and transfer them from the temporarily occupied peninsula to Russia. The illegal relocation of the population from Russia into the temporarily occupied Crimea continues. Among the most recent developments – Russia's intention to legitimize the demographic changes on the peninsula by conducting all-Russian census in the temporarily occupied territory.

Together with the impunity of the Russian occupation administration for these crimes such unacceptable situation has become a "new normal" in the Russia-occupied Crimea.

All actions by the occupying power are accompanied with heinous repressions against disloyal and dissenting voices, most notably the wave of illegal arrests this autumn of many Crimean Tatars, including First Deputy Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People Nariman Dzhelyal. A few days ago, new illegal search of Crimean Tatars' house resulted in the detention of 23-year-old Kurtumer Chalgozov.

We welcome the comprehensive official statement by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights entitled "The persecution of Crimean Tatars must stop" issued on 25 November 2021.

We encourage the ODIHR to join efforts of other international organizations and make its meaningful contribution to the implementation of the UN General Assembly resolutions on "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine."

We also invite the ODIHR to support the activities of the Crimea Platform and contribute to the enhanced international cooperation aimed at protecting human rights in the occupied peninsula.

**Mr. Director,**

We support position of the ODIHR regarding the issue of observers for the parliamentary elections in Russia, which took place on 17-19 September 2021,

We stress that the conduct of so-called "elections" in the temporarily occupied Crimea is unlawful as they violate the legislation of Ukraine and norms of international law, and their results are null and void.

We wish to recall that in line with the UN GA Resolution 68/262 "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine" it is expected that all States, international organizations and specialized agencies will refrain from any action or dealing that might be interpreted as recognizing any alteration of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as an integral part of Ukraine.

On 5 October 2021, the restrictive measures were introduced in Ukraine against the persons who were registered as candidates and members of the relevant so-called "election commissions", illegally operating in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

We therefore expect the OSCE's Chairpersonship, Parliamentary Assembly, Secretariat, ODIHR and other executive structures to take all necessary measures to prevent the registration as participants or accreditation as members of delegation of the above-mentioned persons at any event under the OSCE auspices.

We once again thank you, Director Mecacci, for your presentation and wish every success in your responsible endeavors.

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**