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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR PASQUALE FERRARA, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL
AFFAIRS AND SECURITY OF ITALY, AT THE 1391st (REINFORCED) MEETING
OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 September 2022

Mr. Chairperson,

Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union and wishes to make a few remarks in a national capacity.

The worst war of aggression on our continent since the end of the Second World War has shattered the foundations of the European security architecture, leading to enormous human suffering and destruction in Ukraine and negative ramifications on a global scale, including increased food insecurity and higher energy prices. Italy condemns in the strongest terms Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. Italy will continue to provide Ukraine and its people with steadfast and practical support in their struggle to defend their territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence, freedom and democracy.

Despite the fact that this Permanent Council and the broader international community have repeatedly raised their voices to demand that the Russian Federation end its armed aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory, Russia has chosen the path of escalation and confrontation, most recently announcing a partial mobilization in Russia, supporting the organization of illegal referendums in Ukrainian territories currently under its occupation and threatening once again the use of unconventional weapons.

With the partial mobilization, Russia has chosen to increase the cost of war for its own population as well. The images of the past few days of protests across Russia against the draft and the queues of thousands of Russian citizens leaving their country for abroad clearly indicate that a great number of Russian citizens have no intention of dying while fighting for an unjust and wrongful cause.

Italy strongly condemns the illegal referendums aimed at Russia's annexation of parts of the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions, areas that are currently under Russian occupation. These illegal referendums are a further violation of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will never recognize these areas as anything other than an integral part of Ukraine.

As for the threat of nuclear weapons, leaders at the United Nations General Assembly session last week in New York signalled that the use of such weapons is unacceptable under any circumstances, and we

repeat the same here. Such a threat does not undermine the determination and unity of the European Union Member States in standing by Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have all seen the images of the massacres perpetrated recently in Iziium that echo those committed in Bucha and elsewhere. Italy condemns these horrific acts and is committed to supporting the international community in its efforts to ensure that those responsible are held to account. There can be no impunity. In the OSCE, we have supported the Moscow Mechanism, the timely invocation of which has made it possible on the one hand to establish the facts about the heinous crimes committed in Ukraine and on the other hand to assess the deteriorating human rights situation in Russia. It is essential that the authoritative reports prepared by the various independent expert missions established under the Moscow Mechanism this year be widely disseminated in support of the international community's efforts to ensure accountability.

We take this opportunity to condemn, in line with the Polish Chairmanship and the Secretary General, the sentences against two members of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) – Maxim Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov – and call for the release of all three SMM members currently in detention.

Finally, Italy remains firm in its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and demands that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you.