



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

PC.DEL/43/19
18 January 2019

ENGLISH only

**Statement of the Delegation of Ukraine
in response to the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,
Mr. George Tsereteli**

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1212th meeting of the Permanent Council,
17 January 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Ukraine joins previous speakers in warmly welcoming President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Mr. George Tsereteli back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for comprehensive presentation and expressing views of possible cooperation in addressing the current challenges in the OSCE region.

We welcome this yet another opportunity to exchange views on generating “political will in support of the implementation of the OSCE commitments” by both the inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary parts of our Organization as you stated in your previous address to the Permanent Council on 11 October 2018.

We appreciate the visits to Ukraine of the members of the Assembly last year, including two delegations headed by you personally, Mr. President. The trips of the OSCE PA representatives, including to the contact line areas, have provided them with clear proofs of the aftermaths of Russian hybrid aggression against my country.

As you pointed out today in your statement, “the days around New Year celebrations did not give much reason for optimism”: the Russian occupation forces breached the cease-fire recommitment in Donbas just in few hours after it started as well as they continued persecution of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in the occupied Crimea.

This multi-faceted aggression continues and Russia remains in clear, gross and uncorrected violation of the norms and principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter as well as the biggest security challenge in Europe.

Mr. President,

It is imperative for European security to show resolve in taking Russia to account for its flagrant breach of its international obligations and commitments. In this regard, we acknowledge the firm position of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the respective documents adopted in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 – that is at each of the Annual sessions since the beginning of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. In particular, the parliamentarians called upon the Russian Federation to fully comply with its obligations under the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and other norms and principles of international law; to stop aggression against Ukraine; to reverse the attempted annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol; to halt its

destabilization campaign and fueling of the conflict in Donbas and fully implement the undertaken Minsk commitments; to withdraw its troops, mercenaries and weaponry from the Ukrainian territory; to put an end to gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, illegally occupied by Russia.

We encourage the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to explore additional mechanisms for ensuring full implementation of its respective Resolutions.

We support your efforts, Mr. President, at promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular during conflict. We have witnessed from the developments in the Crimean peninsula and parts of Donbas under Russia's occupation that the most glaring violations of human rights take place in situations of foreign occupation. There is a specific area where we believe more could be achieved with greater involvement of the OSCE PA – that is the priority humanitarian issue of release of Ukrainian citizens imprisoned by Russia as political prisoners. Among them the Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, journalist Roman Sushchenko, farmer Volodymyr Balukh and many many others. There are over 70 Ukrainian citizens who have been incarcerated by the Russian authorities on fabricated charges and made hostages.

We reiterate our call on a stronger proactive role of the Parliamentary Assembly in seeking release of these innocent people.

Mr.President,

Russia consistently attempts to deny its responsibilities as the party to the conflict and, in parallel, takes steps that further aggravate the situation.

On 25 November 2018, the Russian Federation committed yet another unprovoked act of aggression against Ukraine, when the Russian border patrol ships deliberately used military force against three Ukrainian vessels in international waters in the Black Sea near the Kerch Strait. 24 Ukrainian servicemen have been captured and are now prisoners of war illegally detained in the Russian prisons as hostages.

You witnessed, Mr. President, that this act of aggression against Ukraine by Russia was the main topic during the Milan Ministerial Council meeting and we appreciate that you paid attention to it today in your address.

As emphasised by Foreign Minister of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin in Milan, together we must strongly demand from Russia immediate release of Ukrainian servicemen and safe return to Ukraine.

Only consolidated and coordinated pressure by the international community can make this happen. The OSCE PA has to play its role as well.

These grave violations of the OSCE founding principles and commitments as well as international maritime law require to be urgently addressed by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its General Committees in a focused and effective manner, including at the upcoming Winter meeting in Vienna.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, once again for addressing the Permanent Council and express full support for the activities of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its efforts of upholding respect for the Helsinki Final Act principles as the foundation for peace and security in Europe.

Thank you, Mr.Chairperson.