



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement in Response to the Address by the Chairperson-in-Office
of the OSCE, Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Finland H.E. Ms. Elina VALTONEN**

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Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna
to the 1505th special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
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Madam Chairperson,

Ukraine warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland H.E. Ms. Elina Valtonen. Your first visit to Ukraine speaks volumes about the CIO's priorities. As President Zelenskyy said on that occasion, I quote, "the OSCE can play a greater role in protecting lives. Together, we can bring lasting peace closer". And we know, despite Russia's attempts to immobilize the OSCE, our Organization is capable of contributing to this just cause. We must maintain the momentum.

To this end, the Russian war of aggression must remain in the OSCE's focus in all its three dimensions, as it has been under the previous Chairs of Poland, North Macedonia and Malta. Meanwhile Ukraine's Peace Formula must remain a roadmap for any potential OSCE engagement. We look forward to working closely with the CIO and the distinguished delegations in this regard.

The CIO's visit to the Okhmatdyt was more than just a sign of solidarity. The obliterated walls of the hospital, which is usually the last hope for children, is a stark reminder of Russia's genocidal intentions towards Ukraine. Sadly, there are many more such places across Ukraine. Places that should have been shelters, but have been turned into mass graves by Russian missiles and bombs.

Russia expects the terror to win. The day of the CIO's visit was no exception. Then the Russian strike on densely populated Zaporizhzhia left 13 people dead and 112 injured. This demonstrated Russia's contempt for the OSCE principles. And the illegal detention of the three OSCE officials stands alone in this regard.

The killing civilians, shelling of residential areas, targeting critical energy infrastructure, as it happened again during the missile attack on 15 of January, deportation and forced adoption of children, military indoctrination of the youth, taking civilian hostages, and systematic execution of the POWs – have already become the true face of Russia's promises to respect international law.

Claims to Ukraine's sovereign territories, attempts to impose its repressive law in the temporarily occupied territories; tries to change the ethnic composition there, including through filtration, repression, deportation, resettlement, and assimilation – all this illustrates too well what Russia means when it denies Ukraine's right to exist.

In this sense, the monitoring and documentation of all atrocities committed by Russia in Ukraine should be further prioritized. The human life is and will remain the greatest value to be protected, including by the OSCE.

And as Russia continues to instrumentalize the issue of national minorities, of democratic institutions, including elections, and freedoms, such as of religion or belief and media, we call on the CIO to provide the necessary political guidance and support to the OSCE institutions, with due respect for their mandates, in order to duly address Russia's violations. This remains essential to ensure future accountability for Russia and justice for victims.

Madam Chairperson,

Since the occupation of Crimea, Russia's revanchism has become the greatest threat to the OSCE and its participating States. And let's make no mistake. The same people, who lied about unknown "green men" in Crimea, denied Russia's presence in the Donbas, and rejected that Russia was preparing to invade Ukraine, are saying today that Russia wants peace for Europe forever. This is how Moscow camouflages its desire to divide Europe into new zones of influence and plunge our region into the chaos of power politics. We must not allow ourselves to be manipulated again.

But by using force to redraw borders, Russia has violated many taboos. Deepening ties with Iran and the DPRK exposes the Middle East and Indo-Pacific to instability and calls into question the future of the non-proliferation regime. The leak of Russian oil tankers in the Kerch Strait raises questions about the protection of other straits and oceans from the Russian "shadow" fleet, and speaks volumes about why respect for the rules matters. The increase in Russia's malign activities calls for greater cooperation against this threat. And Russia's use of oil and gas revenues to undermine our own security demands that we resolve this dilemma as soon as possible.

In 2014, when the first Russian boots appeared in Crimea and Donbas, were we thinking about these consequences of Russia's revanchism? And shouldn't we expect a higher price for the security of our societies in the future, if Russia's aggression is again left unchecked today? That's why our discussions in the OSCE must be guided by this understanding. Not by an agenda as we wish it to be. Only by bringing Russia to its senses we can create a new climate in the OSCE.

In the meantime, Ukraine, like no one else, wants peace, but not at any price as it will bring no real peace but new tragedies in the future.

That's why any plan to force Russia to stop its aggression must include a strong deterrent against Kremlin's revanchism and credible guarantees for Ukraine's future and its territorial integrity. Continued support of Ukraine together with its integration into Europe's common security architecture will lay the necessary foundations for stability within the OSCE.

Excellencies,

As the Helsinki Decalogue turns its 50th anniversary, our freedom, security and future are at stake. Our response today will define Europe's future for the next 50 years. Fortunately, we have everything we need to protect them. Russia has revealed the unbreakability of our unity. The invincibility of our solidarity. And the might of our principles. Thanks to this, Russia failed to conquer Ukraine in three days. And three years after the war began, Ukraine stands firmly. The Free World stands firmly.

This is what peace through strength means. As the CIO's three guiding principles stand for. And the best way to mark the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Decalogue is to finally force Russia to respect human life and the right of each participating State to determine its own future. Finland can fully rely on Ukraine's support for such a principled leadership in all three dimensions of the OSCE.

I thank you.