



**Delegation of Ukraine
to the OSCE**

**Address by Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Andriy
Deshchytsia to the OSCE Permanent Council**

990th meeting of the Permanent Council,
20 March 2014

*Mr. Chairman,
Dear Ambassadors,
Dear colleagues,*

First of all I would like to thank the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship for this opportunity to meet the OSCE Permanent Council at this grave moment for Ukraine as well as for the entire OSCE region.

Just several months ago I attended the meeting of the Permanent Council in my **previous capacity** as Ukraine's CiO Special Representative on Conflicts. It reminds me of how our common efforts resulted in a number of practical achievements on the ground and an adoption in Kyiv of two ministerial statements on the Transdnestrian settlement process and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution.

I could not imagine at that time that the purpose of my next visit to the OSCE Permanent Council meeting would be the discussion of the occupation by one of the OSCE states of a part of my own country's territory that has a deeply destabilizing effect on the security of the OSCE region and of the whole world.

Over the recent weeks we are witnessing the **most flagrant violation of international law** in the OSCE region since the times of World War II. After two weeks of blatant occupation an integral part of Ukraine has been forcibly annexed by a state that previously committed itself to guarantee independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country in accordance with the Budapest Memorandum, as well as contrary to the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, bilateral and multilateral agreements.

According to the definitions given in the Resolution of the UN General Assembly № 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974, **actions undertaken by the Russian Federation** in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea are to be qualified as an **act of aggression against Ukraine**.

The strong support for and solidarity with Ukraine regarding this issue, expressed by the overwhelming majority of states and respected international institutions, indicate that the broad international community shares this view.

Discussions of the Russian military intervention in Ukraine held within the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the OSCE clearly demonstrated how isolated Russia is on this issue. The mixture of concocted justifications, half-truths, deliberate distortions and naked lies offered by the Russian side failed to impress the wide international community.

The case in point here is the persistent reluctance of the Russian Federation to join the consensus at this very body to establish a monitoring mission to Ukraine, which we invited. The respective draft resolution has been torpedoed by the Russian delegation three times already.

These Russian actions have all the signs of a deliberate tactic to undermine at all costs the efforts of the OSCE community to send independent civilian monitors to Ukraine to make an objective assessment of the situation on the ground. In light of all this the only logical explanation would be is that the Russian Federation tries to avoid exposure of its actions in Ukraine and its lies about the situation in my country.

Under the circumstances there is no exaggeration in stating that Russia effectively took hostage the entire OSCE community. It trampled on the basic premise of this Organization to work for the benefit of everyone. Russia forces upon the OSCE an approach that can be characterized only as satisfying and appeasing of just one, namely the Russian Federation.

For the Organization it is a defining moment. It is time to decide if the OSCE can stand the test or is doomed to slip into the irrelevance.

We very much hope that the OSCE can rise up to the challenge and continue to be an organization whose opinion and actions matter. On our side we are open to an all encompassing and comprehensive cooperation with all OSCE institutions.

Only yesterday we welcomed the ODIHR OSCE election observation mission in Ukraine that would monitor the upcoming early presidential elections. The mission has our full support and will get necessary assistance and facilitation from the Ukrainian authorities. The High Commissioner of National Minorities is also welcome to visit Ukraine at any time. We also highly value the advice and the opinion of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. We welcome continuation of the work of the military observers under the Vienna Document who are now present in Ukraine.

We are convinced that the OSCE still has a lot to offer. We just have to make good use of the available resources and tools.

In light of all of the said above I encourage all the OSCE participating states to approach the problem that we all now face with full understanding of the responsibility that lies on all our shoulders. Because the current crisis around Ukraine's Crimea is not just our internal problem, it is neither an exclusively bilateral Ukrainian-Russian problem, it is a stress test of the very foundations of the existing structure of international relations.

There is still time to correct the wrong that has been done already in relation to my country and we call on everyone to seize this opportunity to start doing right before it is too late.

Thank you for your attention.