



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
AT THE 989TH FSC PLENARY MEETING
(20 October 2021)**

**Agenda item 1, Security Dialogue: Code of Conduct with particular emphasis on
the integration of women in armed forces**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful to the Austrian FSC Chairpersonship for bringing this important topic to the attention of the Forum. We welcome the speakers and thank them for their contribution to our discussion today.

The Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security remains important and valuable for ensuring responsible and co-operative relations between participating States. In our view, it is just as relevant today as it was when it was agreed in 1994. We consider the Code of Conduct an appropriate toolkit for soft security- and confidence-building, with intrastate norms for politico-military conduct providing much of the document's added value.

Ukraine consistently and in good faith delivers its commitments under the Code of Conduct, notwithstanding the ongoing armed aggression by the Russian Federation and occupation of a part of our territory. Respect of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the armed forces personnel has become one of the most important priority principles of the Ukrainian state.

Mr. Chairperson,

7 years ago, the 14th of October was proclaimed a National Day of Defenders of Ukraine to honour the courage and heroism of defenders of independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. This past August, the name of this holiday was officially changed to become the National Day of Men and Women Defenders of Ukraine. We consider this change of name very important not from the point of view of linguistics, but from the point of view of substance. Gender equality and equal capabilities, including in matters of national defence, are key to national resilience and security.

It is a tragic irony, but the Russian aggression against Ukraine has become the boost to acknowledge an important contribution that women make every day in defending Ukraine. In the course of the Anti-Terrorist Operation and the Joint Forces Operation, the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations underwent a significant transformation, which was accompanied by changes in the legal guarantees for the protection of the rights and freedoms of military personnel, including through integration of a gender perspective into the daily life of the Ukrainian army.

We appreciate the OSCE support in promoting equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the defence and security sector. The Guidebook on Gender Integration in the Ukrainian Armed Forces, released in 2020, serves as a successful example of our tangible cooperation.

Ensuring gender equality and overcoming gender stereotypes in the Armed Forces occupy a significant place in a wide scope of issues related to reforming the security and defence sector of Ukraine.

It is quite an achievement for the whole nation that the artificially created limitations and restrictions, which had existed in the Ukrainian Army since the Soviet time, have been removed. Only a few positions that are prohibited for women remain in the Navy. These include combat positions, including positions on ships involving toxic and explosive substances. It is planned to lift these restrictions in the coming months.

Currently, about 56,000 women serve and work in the Ukrainian Army. It is 30 times more than we had 12 years ago. Among them, there are 31,000 military personnel - this is 15% of the total.

There are two women in Ukraine who were promoted to the rank of general: Brigadier General of the Medical Service Lyudmila Shugaley, and current Minister of Veterans Affairs Yulia Laputina.

Women were given access to studies in the military educational institutions of all the levels. In 2019, for the first time in Ukraine's history, women got the right to enter military lyceums. In 2021, 107 girls entered military lyceums.

Gender advisors have become an important part of national gender machinery. In the Ministry of Defence alone, the total number of such advisors amounts to 75 people. There are gender advisors in all higher educational institutions of the defence sector, and executive bodies under the Ministry of Interior of Ukraine – the National Guard, Border Police, State Emergency Service.

In October 2020, the Government of Ukraine adopted the second 5-year National Action Plan on implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and that is a sign of Ukraine's strong political will to promote further the "Women, peace, and security" agenda.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.