



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Andrii SYBIHA
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
at the 31st Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council**

(5 December 2024, Malta)

Mister Chairperson, Excellencies,

I am grateful to Deputy Prime Minister Ian Borg and the Chair of Malta for their leadership. We value Malta's firm stance on defending the OSCE principles.

Mister Chairperson,

Ukraine is bleeding. Every day and night, Russia tries to cause more suffering and destruction. But Ukraine is fighting. Fighting for its right to exist. And today is the sad anniversary of one of the documents that led to this reality.

On this day 30 years ago, the Budapest Memorandum was signed. By the way, at the margins of the CSCE summit. The expectations were high. Ukraine agreed to give up its nuclear arsenal. In exchange we expected respect for our territorial integrity and the right to freely choose our future. Nothing more than is written in the Helsinki Final Act.

The Budapest Memorandum failed. The Russian dictatorship started a war of aggression against Ukraine.

Since the Second World War, Europe has not seen such a scale of atrocities, murder of civilians, kidnapping of children, execution of prisoners of war, and other horrible crimes. Moscow tries to justify all of this with the so-called "legitimate security concerns". But my nation's right to exist is not Russia's legitimate security concern. My nation's choice of its own future is not Russia's legitimate security concern. In fact, Russia itself is the biggest security concern for the world. For hundreds of years.

When Russians say they want peace – they lie. They talk about negotiations only to divert attention from what they are really doing. Look at their actions, not their words. In reality, Russia continues to expand the war.

First, by terrorizing civilians with constant missile and drone attacks, by killing entire families in their homes. Second, by trying to cause a nuclear catastrophe through systematic strikes on energy infrastructure, and occupation of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Third, by involving weapons from Iran and the DPRK, as well as deploying North Korean troops. And fourth, by firing an intermediate range ballistic missile at Ukraine.

These actions demand strong responses. Peace through strength. Not appeasement. We must raise the cost of the war for the aggressor. We must force Moscow to accept a just peace. We must demonstrate strength and unity in the face of blackmail. Now is the time to defend our principles, not simply declare them.

The Budapest Memorandum has shown the price of agreements at the cost of Ukraine. There will be no compromises on our territorial integrity, sovereignty or future security.

We saw the real Russian peace plan. We saw it in Bucha, Mariupol, Izyum and other places. When the Russians say “peace” they mean murdered Ukrainian civilians, mass graves and cities razed to the ground. Ukrainian children sent to Russian families and given Russian names. Filtration, kill lists, forced Russification and assimilation. We will never accept such a peace.

Our peace plan is for Russia to get out of Ukraine and leave us alone. Entirely in accordance with the Helsinki Final Act.

Excellencies,

In this chamber, we are making statements and expressing our opinions. But outside of this chamber, Ukraine is bleeding, the security in Europe, the Indo-Pacific, and the Middle East is falling apart, and the world is in chaos. Let’s make two points clear.

Russia wants a second Yalta or at least a third Minsk. They want a world of zones of influence where the use of force dictates new rules and new borders. There will be no Yalta-2 or Minsk-3.

Ukraine instead wants to win a just peace. And respect for principles for all. These are the two approaches to the future that are being decided right now in Ukraine. We need to act now to ensure that the future comes. We need to eliminate grey zones, because Russia turns them into zones of influence. Instead, we need geopolitical certainty on Ukraine as part of the Euro-Atlantic community.

Second, Russia is not a partner; it is the biggest threat to our common security. Russia’s participation in the OSCE is a threat to cooperation in Europe. And it will remain so. Russia is deepening cooperation with Iran and North Korea, interfering in Georgia, Moldova, the Western Balkans, and other states, and waging a hybrid war against Europe. We therefore welcome the fact that resilience will be in the focus of the incoming Chair of Finland.

In the OSCE, we are used to talking about indivisible security. But I propose to talk about indivisible peace. The restoration of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, as well as strong deterrence against the Russian threat will contribute to this indivisibility of peace. And this is exactly what the Peace Formula proposes. The OSCE should play a role in the implementation of the Peace Formula.

We also expect the OSCE’s new heads of Institutions and Secretariat to show strong leadership in defending its principles, further isolating Russia and using all existing OSCE tools to address and document the crimes committed by the Kremlin regime.

There will be no peace without justice. As long as Russia violates OSCE principles and commitments, this Organization should remain a platform for Russia’s

accountability. This especially matters for OSCE colleagues Maksym Petrov, Vadym Golda and Dmytro Shabanov, who have been in Russia's illegal custody for almost three years. Russia holds the OSCE hostage just as it holds these three people hostage.

Esteemed colleagues,

I thank my colleague Ian Borg and his able team for successfully steering the work of the Organization throughout the year. I wish my Finnish colleague Elina a successful work ahead as Finland takes the helm of the Organization. You can count on us.

After joining NATO, Finland itself manifests the freedom of choice. This is what the people of Ukraine are fighting for. The forthcoming 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act must be an anniversary of fulfilled commitments, not unfulfilled expectations. Together we must make it a success.

Ukraine continues to fight for its right to exist. And the Russian war criminal at this table must know: Ukraine will win this right and justice will prevail.

Thank you, Mister Chairperson.