



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement in response to the address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, H.E. Ms Elina VALTONEN

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Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
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Madam Chairperson,

We join other delegations in warmly welcoming Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, H.E. Ms Elina Valtonen, to the Permanent Council.

Madam Minister, we appreciate your personal presentation of the future priorities of the incoming Chairpersonship for 2025.

We are grateful to Finland for their determination to continue the practices established by the current and previous Chairpersonships, namely, Poland, North Macedonia and Malta, by keeping the main focus of the OSCE on Russia's war.

This war has become a watershed for the OSCE exposing Russia as the only participating state that still believes that it can veto freedom of choice and conquer its neighbours instead. This is a major threat to stability in Europe. And this threat must be isolated once and for all.

Madam Minister,

Almost 50 years ago, the OSCE participating States agreed that there is no place for a war of aggression, killing, tortures, deportation, change of borders by force, coercion into submission, threat or use of force, while the respect for human rights has been at the very heart of the Helsinki Final Act since then.

And we applaud the determination of the future Chair to build its activities on this consensus and to safeguard the integrity of the Helsinki Decalogue.

For long ten years, the illegal occupation of Crimea has become a sad and stark reminder about this interlinkage of the OSCE founding principles. What started as a violation of Ukraine's border, later turned into gross human rights violations and immense human suffering leading to the biggest land war in Europe in decades.

That's why today it is more than clear that the road to a lasting and just peace in Europe lies through the respect for international law, territorial integrity and sovereign equality of the participating States.

Therefore, the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity is a cornerstone of President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula.

Despite Russia's attempts to immobilize the OSCE through appealing to formalities, our Organization has proved of being able to play a role in building a lasting and just peace in Europe based on this 10-points Peace Formula.

First of all, thanks to the political will of the OSCE Chairs, including the leadership being demonstrated by the current CIO of Malta.

Over the past years the OSCE has also proved to be capable of contributing to russia's accountability through the use of its mechanisms for monitoring and documentation of the human rights violations.

In the context of russia's aggressive war this includes the violation of international humanitarian law, mistreatment of detention of prisoners of war, disrespect of religious freedoms in the occupied territories of Ukraine, dehumanizing and promoting hatred toward the Ukrainian people or any other OSCE participating State, addressing the use of torture as a state policy, persecution and illegal detention of civilians, imprisonment of dissenting voices, deportation and indoctrination of children and so on.

We strongly believe that the future Chair will maintain the momentum. Because there could be only one response to human rights violations – it is restoring justice for victims by holding an aggressor to account. In other words, there can be no peace without justice.

Furthermore, we welcome the fact that resilience will be in Chair's focus. For years, russia has been conducting hybrid attacks against OSCE participating States, including by combining cyber warfare and information terrorism. Recently, there has been a sharp increase in russia's malign activities.

At the same time, russia's attempt to establish organized crime networks in order to bypass sanctions is another challenge to the rule of law across the OSCE region.

As moscow remains focused on undermining our societies and social cohesion, including through spreading disinformation, election meddling, cyberattacks, we believe that the OSCE and its Institutions are well-mandated to contribute to elaborating a common vision of how to deal with these threats. We welcome Finland's intentions to apply the existing OSCE toolbox in this regard.

Also, russia's war has particularly highlighted a nexus between security and environment. The OSCE has to continue to be a platform for addressing food and energy insecurity, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, backsliding on climate change obligations and deliberate attacks on critical infrastructure and man-made disasters due to the ongoing russian war.

These are some of many examples why we cannot build common security with russia. To preserve our societies whole, democratic and free, we must exclude and confront the threat posed by russia.

Madam Minister,

It is symbolic, that on the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act our Organization will have Finland at the helm. Not because of history of the signing of the document. But because Finland itself has become the manifestation of state's right to freely choose its future, as enshrined by the Helsinki Final Act.

This is what deeply resonates with the Ukrainian people who are fighting to protect their very right to exist and to defend inherent right to decide on their future.

Thus, we are glad to see that protecting the OSCE basics will be at the heart of the Chairpersonship's efforts to promote activities within our Organization. This is where the true mission of the CIO stands.

Minister Valtonen, Finland as the incoming chair may count on Ukraine's full support for its initiatives in all three dimensions of the OSCE. We have already had excellent collaboration with your team in this regard. Ahead of the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, our unity and adherence to principles are the key to a lasting peace in Europe and strengthening the rules-based international order.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.