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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR SUSANNE SCHÜTZ, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, AT THE 1437th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 August 2023

Mr. Chairperson,
Madam Secretary General,
Esteemed colleagues,

Today marks the 32nd anniversary of Ukrainian independence. With its Declaration of Independence on 24 August 1991, Ukraine made a decision against dictatorship and for democracy and human rights. This independence is something that Ukraine has resolutely defended since then, continuing firmly on its path towards Europe, even in the face of repeated attempts by Russia to negate its identity, culture and history.

Today also marks 18 months since the start of the brutal Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and identity. Thousands of Ukrainians have lost their lives, millions were forced to leave their country. It was an attack not only on Ukraine but also on the values of the international community and on international law. An attack on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and on the principles embodied by this organization, the OSCE.

From the outset of the war, Germany has staunchly supported Ukraine – by word and deed – in its defence effort and also in its reconstruction.

Similarly, we will ensure that Russia is held accountable for its criminal actions.

As Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said yesterday at the summit of the Crimea Platform:

- Russia’s annexations are null and void.
- Luhansk is part of Ukraine.
- Donetsk is part of Ukraine.
- Zaporizhzhia is part of Ukraine.
- Kherson is part of Ukraine.

– And Crimea is part of Ukraine.

Going forward, too, Ukraine can fully count on our support. We want Ukraine to win this war. We want Ukraine to win peace.