

Chairmanship: Poland

1355th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. Date: Thursday, 17 February 2022 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Suspended: 1.05 p.m.
Resumed: 3.05 p.m.
Closed: 5.10 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador A. Hałaciński

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Permanent Council, the Dean of the Permanent Council (Liechtenstein), Sweden and the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, offered condolences to the delegation of Slovakia on the passing away of the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the OSCE and former Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Radomir Boháč.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: UPDATE BY THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE IN UKRAINE AND IN THE TRILATERAL CONTACT GROUP

Discussion under agenda item 2

Agenda item 2: REPORT BY THE CHIEF MONITOR OF THE OSCE SPECIAL MONITORING MISSION TO UKRAINE

Chairperson, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (PC.FR/1/22 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/197/22), France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in

alignment) (PC.DEL/211/22), Russian Federation (Annex 1), Canada (PC.DEL/223/22 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/228/22 OSCE+), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/329/22 OSCE+), Georgia (PC.DEL/218/22 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/201/22 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/199/22), Holy See (PC.DEL/198/22 OSCE+), Kyrgyzstan, San Marino (PC.DEL/220/22 Restr.), OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Bosnia and Herzegovina (PC.DEL/221/22 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/200/22)

Agenda item 3: **THEMATIC REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
“STEPPING UP THE OSCE’S EFFORTS TO ADDRESS
CHALLENGES CAUSED BY CLIMATE CHANGE”**

Secretary General (SEC.GAL/27/22 OSCE+), France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/213/22/Rev.1), Slovenia (PC.DEL/205/22 OSCE+), Canada, United States of America (PC.DEL/214/22), Uzbekistan, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/206/22), Switzerland, Turkey (PC.DEL/225/22 OSCE+), Belgium (PC.DEL/227/22), United Kingdom, Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/208/22 OSCE+), Germany (Annex 2), France (PC.DEL/202/22 OSCE+), North Macedonia, Sweden

Agenda item 4: **REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES**

Ongoing violations of human rights in Latvia: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/204/22), Latvia (Annex 3)

Agenda item 5: **REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE**

- (a) *Visit of the Chairman-in-Office to Ukraine from 9 to 11 February 2022:*
Chairperson
- (b) *Telephone conversation between the Chairman-in-Office and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, H.E. Ms. M. Joly, on 14 February 2022:*
Chairperson
- (c) *Visit of the Chairman-in-Office to Moscow on 15 February 2022:* Chairperson
- (d) *Telephone conversation between the Chairman-in-Office and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, H.E. Mr. D. Kuleba, on 16 February 2022:*
Chairperson
- (e) *Meeting of the Chairman-in-Office with the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group held on 16 February 2022:* Chairperson

- (f) *Participation of the Chairman-in-Office in the 21st Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, to be held in Vienna and via video teleconference on 24 and 25 February 2022: Chairperson*
- (g) *Meeting requested by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia under the Vienna Document, Chapter III, regarding unusual military activities, held on 14 February 2022 (CBM/LT/22/0004/F12/O): Chairperson*
- (h) *Meeting requested by Ukraine under the Vienna Document, Chapter III, regarding unusual military activities, held on 15 February 2022 (CBM/UA/22/0017/F12/O): Chairperson*
- (i) *84th (special) joint meeting of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation, held on 16 February 2022: Chairperson*
- (j) *First preparatory meeting for the 30th Economic and Environmental Forum on “Promoting security and stability in the OSCE area through sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic”, held in Vienna and via video teleconference on 14 and 15 February 2022: Chairperson*
- (k) *Update on planned events in the human dimension in 2022: Chairperson*

Agenda item 6: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Letter from the Secretary General concerning early warning with regard to the situation in and around Ukraine and the wider region (SEC.GAL/25/22 Restr.): Secretary General, France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (Annex 4), Ukraine (PC.DEL/229/22), Canada (Annex 5), United States of America (PC.DEL/215/22), Switzerland, United Kingdom (Annex 6), Russian Federation (Annex 7), Georgia (PC.DEL/219/22 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/226/22 OSCE+), Chairperson*
- (b) *Letter from the Chairperson of the Permanent Council and the Secretary General on the situation concerning the OSCE field operations in Ukraine (SEC.GAL/24/22 Restr.): Secretary General*

Agenda item 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Presidential election in France, to be held on 10 and 24 April 2022, and parliamentary elections in France, to be held on 12 and 19 June 2022: France (PC.DEL/207/22 OSCE+)*
- (b) *Presidential election and early parliamentary elections in Serbia, to be held on 3 March and 3 April 2022, respectively: Serbia (PC.DEL/217/22 OSCE+)*

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 3 March 2022, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1355
17 February 2022
Annex 1

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

1355th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1355, Agenda item 2

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the distinguished Ambassadors Mikko Kinnunen and Yaşar Halit Çevik to our meeting. We listened with interest to the reports presented.

You are working in an extremely difficult information environment. It is full of disinformation and propaganda of an unprecedented nature that is being spread by a number of OSCE participating States. Let us recall how, at the instigation of the US Government, the myth about Russia's alleged "imminent invasion" has been hyped up recently. At first, it was April of last year, then August, later on November, mid-December, Catholic Christmas Eve, then Orthodox Christmas Eve, the opening day of the Beijing Olympics and so on. An exact date was also given this week: 16 February. Now, apparently, there will be new dates.

The "invasion", of course, did not take place. Even the leadership of Ukraine itself did not believe in it. President Zelenskyy demanded that proof be provided of the preparations for the "offensive" – as he emphasized in particular – "if there is any". Back in early November 2021, the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, Oleksii Danilov, called the reports of an invasion part of "information and psychological special operations". Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov also saw no reason for alarm. Lastly, even the Security Service of Ukraine in its statement of 14 February called what was happening "[attempts to] systemically sow panic, spread fake information and distort the real state of affairs".

All this could not but fail to affect Ukraine's economy. According to estimates by Davyd Arakhamia, head of the ruling party's faction in the Ukrainian Parliament, this pre-war hysteria is costing the country 2 to 3 billion dollars a month. At the end of January, President Zelenskyy made a depressing assessment: the Ukrainian economy had already lost at least 12.5 billion US dollars as a result of the ratcheting up of tensions.

We note with regret that public officials and high-ranking politicians in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and a number of Western European countries have taken a very active part in the disinformation campaign aimed at warmongering. Following the evacuation and relocation of their embassy staff in Kyiv, they

urged their citizens to leave Ukraine immediately. Now, despite the fiasco in the propaganda about an “imminent invasion”, the United States, for example, is hypocritically demanding some “proof” that “there will definitely be no such invasion”. All this is akin to irresponsible “information terrorism”, which seems designed to keep everyone in a state of extreme tension.

Mr. Çevik,

As you have already mentioned today, the situation has also affected the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). The authorities of a number of OSCE participating States have decided to withdraw their personnel from the Mission. This was done hastily and, as far as we understand, without prior consultation with the SMM leadership. This blow was evidently intended to sow panic also among the monitors themselves, rendering the Mission incapable of fully implementing its mandate. In any case, it has seriously damaged the reputation of the States that have tried to use our common Mission, the largest OSCE field operation in the pan-European space, for their own political purposes. One can easily ask whether a group of countries engaged in warmongering should be perceived as reliable partners when it comes to carrying out jointly agreed international tasks. The answer to the question of whether they are capable of making any constructive contribution to facilitating a settlement is also obvious.

We have carefully noted your assessment, Mr. Çevik, that there is no reason for an emergency evacuation of the SMM staff at this stage. We understand that the sudden difficulties encountered by the SMM are forcing it to take hasty measures to reorganize its staffing so as to ensure continuous monitoring and reporting activities.

Against this backdrop, some NATO member countries are impetuously militarizing Ukraine. Hundreds of tonnes of lethal weapons are being sent there. More than 40 aircraft with military cargo from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Poland, Lithuania and so on have recently arrived in Kyiv and Lviv. Where will the Ukrainian military be firing these weapons? Is this what facilitating a peaceful, political and diplomatic settlement on the basis of the Minsk agreements looks like? After all, in accordance with paragraph 10 of the Package of Measures, foreign weapons and equipment should be withdrawn from the territory of Ukraine under monitoring of the OSCE rather than being sent there. If the Ukrainian Government has no aggressive plans regarding certain areas of Donbas, why bother with all this? Incidentally, where is the information on these shipments in the SMM reports? Or do such deliveries have no impact on the security situation?

As we can see from the Mission’s reports, the situation at the line of contact remains tense. The ceasefire-strengthening measures of 22 July 2020, which were developed with the personal involvement of Mr. Çevik, continue to be blatantly violated. Since the start of this year, the SMM has already recorded some ten thousand violations. The regular shelling of towns in Donbas, which is inflicting immeasurable suffering on the civilian population, remains a sad fact of everyday life. According to the Donbas authorities, over the past 24 hours alone, 12 settlements have already been shelled with various types of weapons, including large-calibre ones. Speaking of which, when can we expect the latest thematic report by the SMM on civilian casualties and destruction?

The Mission notes the presence of military equipment in violation of the withdrawal lines. We call for increased monitoring of the situation at the line of contact, within the limits of the SMM's capabilities, in order to identify early signs of preparations for armed provocations. If the Mission does not have enough "manpower" to do this, Russia is ready to provide even more highly qualified candidates for responsible positions within the SMM.

We call attention to the Mission's regular reports about the fact that access for monitors to a number of areas near the line of contact is difficult because of the threat posed by mines. I should like to hear specifically as to where these areas are. If patrolling there is problematic, maximum use should be made of technical monitoring equipment.

It is important not to forget one of the main tasks of the SMM, namely to facilitate dialogue on the ground. I should like to hear a clear answer as to what the Mission is doing to help secure the release of Andrey Kosyak, the Luhansk representative to the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination who was abducted by Ukrainian security forces in a disengagement area on 13 October 2021. What is being done to restore the mechanism for providing security guarantees that was destroyed as a result of this kidnapping?

There should be no slackening of attention not only towards Donbas but also towards what is happening in the rest of Ukraine. We expect the Mission to provide high-quality monitoring and a comprehensive analysis of trends in the human rights sphere. In particular, we cannot turn a blind eye to discriminatory practices against the Russian-speaking population, national minorities and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The measures taken by the authorities to suppress dissent and the crackdown, including extrajudicially, on civil society organizations and the largest non-State media cannot be ignored.

Unfortunately, we continue to observe how the most inconvenient facts for the Ukrainian Government – such as manifestations of aggressive nationalism and anti-Semitism or decisions by the State authorities to purge the information space of undesirable media – are not reflected in the SMM's public daily reports. The tendency to put the SMM's observations on these topics in its weekly reports, to which the media and public do not have access, should be rectified.

Mr. Chairperson,

Today marks exactly seven years since the United Nations Security Council endorsed the Minsk Package of Measures in resolution 2202. The document itself, as you know, was signed on 12 February 2015 and entered into force on 15 February of the same year. No matter how much the current political leadership of Ukraine would like to simply rewrite the Package of Measures – for a number of years it has been calling for them to be "modernized", "adapted" or "corrected" – the approval of that document by the United Nations Security Council made it part of international law and subject to mandatory implementation as it stands.

Our French and German "Normandy format" partners, who, along with Russia, helped to draw up this comprehensive document for a settlement of the conflict between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk, acted as its guarantors and repeatedly stressed that there is no alternative to the Minsk agreements, the Package of

Measures must be implemented. We are counting on a constructive contribution from the Normandy format to the Minsk implementation process.

By the way, a special meeting will be held today at the United Nations Security Council on the initiative of the Russian Federation to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Package of Measures. We believe it necessary to step up international efforts in support of a settlement based on that document.

Mr. Kinnunen,

After seven years, it is clear that none of the provisions of the Package of Measures has been fully implemented. Starting with the first point – a ceasefire. The root of the problem remains the same – the Ukrainian Government’s systematic unwillingness to engage in direct dialogue with the plenipotentiary representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) regarding the parameters for a settlement and the basis for a future peaceful existence within a single State. The recent statements by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba confirm that the Ukrainian Government has no intention of doing this and is seeking to replace internal Ukrainian dialogue with some kind of “negotiations” with Russia. It is clear that the Ukrainian authorities have entrenched themselves in this position, not without the “prompting” of their external handlers.

Let us emphasize that Russia is ready to support any agreements that can be worked out between the representatives of the authorities in Kyiv and in certain areas of Donbas as part of the settlement process. We recall the contents of the minutes of the TCG meeting of 11 March 2020, in which the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, Andrii Yermak, confirmed in writing the Ukrainian Government’s recognition of the authority of the current representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk in the TCG. I can show you that document – it says “agreed” in his handwriting and his signature is there. We will keep on calling for effective dialogue.

We note the absence of a public reaction of the OSCE to the statements by Ukraine’s politico-military leadership about the sabotage of the Minsk agreements and the ceasefire-strengthening measures. We expect an unbiased approach from you, Mr. Kinnunen, in carrying out your activities and truly impartial efforts with the sole aim of getting the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk to jointly implement the Package of Measures as soon as possible.

So far, there has been no progress in the political sphere, including in terms of implementing the recommendations to agree on all the legal aspects of a special status for Donbas, which the Normandy Four summit of 9 December 2019 addressed to the TCG. On the contrary, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kuleba has stressed time and again in recent weeks that Donbas would not receive any special status. The Ukrainian Government is ignoring its commitments to carry out constitutional reform, hold an amnesty, organize local elections in consultation with and upon agreement by representatives of Donbas, guarantee linguistic and cultural rights and so on. There has also been zero progress as regards incorporating the “Steinmeier formula” (on the procedure for giving effect to a law on special status) into Ukrainian legislation. Mr. Kinnunen, what is being done specifically in order to find a way out of the impasse in resolving the political issues?

We emphasize that the delegation of Ukraine to the TCG has still not responded to the action plan for implementing the Minsk agreements that was submitted by the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk as far back as October 2020. Furthermore, while proposing to revisit the draft law on a special status, the Ukrainian Government continues to refuse to provide any comments on the amendments to this draft law proposed by the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk in the TCG back in May 2020. The latter is an example of how the Ukrainian Government is simply pretending to take a constructive approach to work in the TCG.

Urgent attention needs to be paid to resolving socio-economic and humanitarian issues in the interests of the population of Donbas. The socio-economic blockade of the region, imposed by the Ukrainian Government in violation of paragraph 8 of the Package of Measures, remains in force. Mr. Kinnunen, what is the likelihood, in your view, of the Ukrainian Government lifting this blockade and what is being done to that end in the Economic Working Group and by you personally?

Mr. Kinnunen,

You mentioned the Russian State Duma. As you know, any appeals by the State Duma to the President of the Russian Federation, including the resolution you mentioned calling for recognition of the republics proclaimed by the people of Donbas, are subject to consideration by the President of the Russian Federation. However, the adoption of such a resolution, unlike a legislative act, does not mean the adoption of a legally binding decision on the issue. The final decision will be taken by the President of the Russian Federation.

This appeal does not have any consequences for the further work of the TCG, whose task it is to assist the Ukrainian side in the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Donbas “in consultation with and upon agreement by representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions” in accordance with the Minsk agreements. This initiative of the State Duma of the Russian Federation has nothing to do with and in no way affects the obligations of Ukraine and certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions under the Minsk agreements, nor the possibility of them fulfilling these obligations. Nor does this appeal in any way affect the work of the Russian delegation in the TCG, unlike the requirement of paragraph 4 of Verkhovna Rada Resolution No. 795-IX of 15 July 2020, which expressly prohibits the Ukrainian delegation from conducting negotiations to reach agreement on the holding of early local elections under the conditions provided for in the Minsk agreements.

On 15 February this year, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, after receiving the appeal in question, stated the need to intensify work on the settlement of the conflict in Donbas in view of the not fully realized opportunities to implement the Minsk agreements.

It is important to ensure the conditions for and facilitate direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk. You, distinguished Ambassadors Kinnunen and Çevik, have a major role to play in implementing these provisions of the Package of Measures. It is necessary to visit the region regularly, establish contact with representatives of local authorities on both sides of the line of contact and receive first-hand information.

You are working, as already mentioned, in an extremely difficult environment. In the current circumstances, it is becoming clear that Ukraine's external handlers want to rekindle the armed conflict in the country at any price and by any means and perpetuate the instability near Russia's borders. NATO countries are deliberately supporting the hotheads in Kyiv, who advocate a military solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine under the slogan of confronting some imaginary "Russian aggression". There are also other objectives – to divert attention from the Ukrainian Government's sabotage of the Minsk agreements, to pave the way for the intensified military assimilation of Ukraine by the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance and, lastly, to switch attention from the need to discuss no less urgent broader issues regarding ways of strengthening security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

The conflict in eastern Ukraine can and must be stopped through the implementation in good faith of all the provisions of the Package of Measures as the sole framework for achieving sustainable peace. Strong signals need to be sent to the Ukrainian Government concerning the necessity of returning to the logic of that document. Attempts by the foreign sponsors of the current Ukrainian authorities to try to justify sabotaging the Minsk agreements are harmful and dangerous for the whole settlement process.

In closing, allow me to wish you, distinguished Ambassadors Kinnunen and Çevik, and all your staff the best of health and the much-needed success in your work.

I request, Mr. Chairperson, that this statement be attached to the journal of today's meeting of the Permanent Council.

Thank you for your attention.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1355
17 February 2022
Annex 2

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

1355th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1355, Agenda item 3

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY**

Mr. Chairperson,

Germany fully endorses the statement by the European Union. I should like to add the following from a national perspective.

Madam Secretary General,

Thank you very much for your report today. We share your assessment of the many risks and threats that climate change poses to our societies, our economies and our common security.

It is only together and by making every effort that we will be able to tackle climate change and its impacts. International climate protection is therefore a top priority for the new Federal Government. During our G7 Presidency, and also at the Munich Security Conference starting tomorrow, the climate crisis and our responses to it will take centre stage.

In our view, joint action to deal with the consequences of climate change also offers a wide range of opportunities and new economic possibilities. We should also use the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to make our economies more sustainable and climate-neutral, above all through innovative, green technologies. At this point, we should also like to thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for the fact that the Polish Chairmanship also attaches great importance to this crucial topic.

With its comprehensive concept of security, the OSCE is an important forum when it comes to the complex impacts of climate change on our security. Climate change will further increase the prevalence of extreme weather events and droughts and resource scarcity. We must prepare ourselves for these challenges and overcome them together. After all, these phenomena have the potential to intensify crisis-like developments and ultimately trigger new conflicts. Germany will again host the high-level Berlin Climate and Security Conference on this topic later this year.

Within the OSCE, we see great potential to further expand the existing excellent initiatives and projects on climate protection and climate and security. We therefore very

much welcome the fact that you, Madam Secretary General, will be hosting a high-level OSCE climate conference at the end of March. There, we will be able to discuss how we will jointly implement in concrete terms the landmark decision of the Ministerial Council in Stockholm in order to achieve tangible progress in dealing with the manifold consequences of climate change.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson, I ask that you attach this statement to the journal of the day.



1355th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1355, Agenda item 4

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF LATVIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

Latvia constantly seeks to improve and develop, not least in the application of human rights standards and the implementation of our international human rights commitments. One way of doing this is by complying with the decisions of international human rights courts.

Let us take a look at the human rights situation in Latvia today.

Not only are freedom of the media and media plurality flourishing in Latvia: Latvia has also become a refuge for journalists, other media workers and entire media outlets from Russia and Belarus, where the space for civil society is shrinking if not already destroyed altogether.

The right to due process is guaranteed to each and every one in Latvia, including access to independent judicial review – in contrast to Russia, where we are seeing yet another politically motivated trial begin against Alexei Navalny, to cite just one example.

Latvia provides State-funded education in seven minority languages.

By the time of the collapse of the USSR – which was one of the most positive developments of the twentieth century – the composition of our country's population had changed drastically owing to the thousands of people who were relocated to occupied Latvia from Soviet Russia and other territories of the Soviet Union to take the place of thousands deported to Siberia and killed by the totalitarian regimes, including the Communist genocide. However, the integration of national minorities in Latvian society has been so successful since independence that the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities regularly asks Latvia to share its experience and good practices with other OSCE participating States. The only tensions in Latvian society remain those fuelled by Russia itself through its proxies, such as Mr. Alexander Gaponenko, mentioned in Russia's statement just now.

Mr. Gaponenko has been convicted under the Latvian Criminal Law's articles on actions promoting the overthrow of the State authority, co-operation with a foreign State to

that end, and actions aimed at inciting national and ethnic hatred. His sentence does not entail deprivation of liberty.

The right to due process still remains available to him, as it does to everyone else in Latvia. Claiming otherwise would be casting doubt on the independence of the judiciary in Latvia. It would be a very serious allegation – raised, incidentally, only by Russia. Besides, such allegations by Russia have of late been concerned mostly with hate speech cases.

To continue with the positive developments in human rights in Latvia: only this month, following a ruling by the Constitutional Court last year, a draft law on civil unions was presented by the Ministry of Justice. The adoption of this law would allow all couples to register their relationship in line with our Constitution's provisions for the protection of all families.

This is a genuine breakthrough for human rights in Latvia regarding one of the very few remaining issues in that area that we had yet to resolve. In Russia, on the other hand, the Ministry of Justice requested, on 8 February, the dissolution of the Russian LGBT Network.

These contrasting examples highlight how it is important to respect the Constitution in its entirety, not merely selected articles – such as, the article about the duration of the President's term in office.

To conclude, every single State in the OSCE area has aspects in its human rights record on which it can improve. I very much hope that, like Latvia, the other OSCE participating States are striving daily to become a better place for all people to live in and prosper, regardless of their gender, nationality, citizenship, religion, belief or social or any other status or group they belong to, and to ensure a society in which freedom of expression is guaranteed while leaving no room for hate speech.

Incidentally, in Latvia anyone may play Minecraft, be it teenagers or adults, whereas in Russia a 16-year-old boy was recently sentenced to five years' imprisonment for playing that video game.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



1355th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1355, Agenda item 6(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The delegation of France, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

We thank the OSCE Secretary General for giving early warning on the risk of further escalation of the already dire security situation with regard to Ukraine. This action is in line with the tasking of Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 on elements of the conflict cycle.

We echo the call of the Secretary General for de-escalation and for full respect of the OSCE principles and commitments that underpin European security, including those enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

The European Union strongly believes that dialogue is the key path to strengthening our comprehensive security and safeguarding peace and stability in the OSCE area. We again call on Russia to immediately de-escalate, to abide by international law and to engage constructively and in good faith in dialogue through the established international mechanisms, including within the OSCE.

In this context, we regret that Russia did not attend the meeting organized under the risk reduction mechanism of the Vienna Document on Tuesday regarding unusual military activities of the Russian Federation. This is not in line with Russia's commitments in the politico-military area and it does not dispel the raised concerns of Ukraine and many other participating States. We take note of the statements by Russian authorities that some of the Russian troops currently deployed at Ukraine's borders and in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula should be returning to their bases. We will continue to closely monitor developments on the ground in this regard.

We stand ready to make full use of all available tools, procedures and mechanisms within the OSCE, including the Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue, and we call on other participating States to do the same.

Finally, the European Union underlines the high value of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine in observing and reporting facts on the ground to the international community and as an active part of the OSCE crisis management structures.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹ and Albania¹, the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Andorra align themselves with this statement.

1 The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1355
17 February 2022
Annex 5

Original: ENGLISH

1355th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1355, Agenda item 6(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to thank the Secretary General for her letter this week, drawing the Permanent Council's attention to "emerging tensions that bear the risk of escalation, exacerbating the crisis, and potentially leading to further conflict, in and around Ukraine and the wider region".

Secretary General,

As we have said many times, including in our earlier statement during the main item of today's Permanent Council meeting, we are concerned that the present situation could lead to severe negative consequences for the security of Ukraine, and throughout the Black Sea region, with potential impacts across the entire OSCE area. We strongly support the Secretariat's use of all relevant tools in the OSCE's toolbox, and we echo your calls for de-escalation, and for all participating States to use the OSCE's tools of dialogue and risk reduction, rather than resorting to military-technical threats.

As part of the early warning tools of the OSCE, we fully support the actions taken both by Ukraine and by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, to invoke Chapter III of the Vienna Document. We appreciate their constructive efforts to seek further information about unusual military activities in neighbouring States, specifically to obtain clarity on the scope and scale of these movements, as well as their strategic intent. Answers to these questions would serve to increase transparency, strengthen confidence and security, and help to de-escalate the current situation. The Vienna Document remains the bedrock of the OSCE's confidence- and security-building measures toolbox and we call on all participating States to participate in good faith in all aspects of the Vienna Document, and any other elements of the OSCE's toolbox, in line with their intent of restoring confidence, building trust and reducing military risks.

Thank you.



1355th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1355, Agenda item 6(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I would like to thank the Secretary General for drawing the Permanent Council's attention to "emerging tensions that bear the risk of escalation, exacerbating the crisis, and potentially leading to further conflict, in and around Ukraine and the wider region" and thus providing early warning. This is a responsible use of the Secretary General's mandate, entrusted by all of us in Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11.

Early warning requires early action and we fully support the Secretary General's call on participating States to make use of all available tools and mechanisms in the OSCE to help de-escalate the situation. We are also grateful for your offer Secretary General to engage with relevant participating States to explore timely and effective responses.

In your letter, you referred to two invocations of Chapter III of the Vienna Document this week, in which Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia and Ukraine have sought explanations from Belarus and Russia respectively for their unusual military activity. It is incumbent on all participating States to engage in these confidence- and security-building measures and provide the necessary transparency to address legitimate concerns raised by other participating States. We engaged in the meetings earlier this week including asking specific questions (and yesterday specific comments). So far, the answers we have received are unsatisfactory. We urge Russia to participate in tomorrow's meeting.

As well as the scope to enhance transparency provided through the risk reduction mechanisms of the Vienna Document, the OSCE can also provide an important platform for dialogue to help de-escalate tensions. It remains the appropriate, and importantly an inclusive and equal platform, for discussions on European security. In this regard, we fully support the Polish Chairmanship's initiative to launch the Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue. This dialogue should be based on the OSCE principles and commitments which all of us have freely signed up to and which, if implemented in full, further enhance the security of us all.

Diplomacy and de-escalation are the only rational way out of this unprecedented challenge to European security.

Mr. Chairperson, in addition to our discussion of the Secretary General's letter, I think it is worth reflecting again on our Permanent Council discussion this morning.

The reports from Ambassadors Kinnunen and Çevik made clear how fragile the security situation in the Russian-instigated conflict in eastern Ukraine is. Moreover, I and many others again highlighted Russia's unprecedented, unprovoked and unjustified military build-up on Ukraine's borders and in illegally annexed Crimea.

On this point, the United Kingdom remains firm and clear. We are open to dialogue with Russia but it is incumbent on Russia to urgently de-escalate the situation it has created. Any further Russian military incursion into Ukraine would be a strategic mistake and incur massive costs to Russia, including through co-ordinated sanctions.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Madam Secretary General,

We are puzzled by your decision to initiate the early warning procedure under the Vilnius Ministerial Council decision on elements of the conflict cycle, related to enhancing the OSCE's capabilities in early warning, early action, dialogue facilitation, mediation support and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The reasoning given in your letter to the effect that this decision was motivated by the growing tensions in the situation "in and around Ukraine" chimes oddly with the pronouncements of those who are stoking up hysteria over an allegedly "inevitable Russian invasion". We believe that this highly contentious step will hardly help to normalize the situation.

Moreover, it is difficult to avoid feeling that it smacks of duplicity. The internal conflict in Ukraine has been going on for almost eight years now. Throughout this period, the Ukrainian Government has been methodically deploying the entire arsenal of its army against the peaceful cities and settlements of Donbas. For example, a few months ago, in October 2021, the Ukrainian armed forces conducted offensive operations in the south of the Donetsk region involving the use of foreign strike weapons systems. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine confirmed at the time that the Ukrainian armed forces were advancing. This led to an escalation of military tensions along the entire line of contact. However, that turn of events did not motivate the launching of any early warning mechanisms. Not even routine expressions of concern were to be heard from the OSCE leadership back then.

For some reason, it is only now that the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council decision has been called to mind. This looks highly inconsistent. If one takes into account, though, the general context and the information campaign – unprecedented in its scale and mendacity – being conducted by a number of OSCE participating States with regard to an imaginary Russian threat, one cannot help asking oneself whose interests are in fact served by the launching of this mechanism.