



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the opening session of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference
(Vienna, 27 June 2017)**

**Dear Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished participants,**

At the outset, we would like to thank the Austrian Chairmanship for its efforts of organizing this year's OSCE Annual Security Review Conference and inviting many eminent speakers and national representatives to this meeting. A comprehensive assessment of current pressing security challenges in the OSCE area remains the key objective of our Organization not only for the declared purposes of overcoming distrust and increasing mutual confidence, but for developing effective responses to these challenges. We expect the discussions at the conference to be substantive and open, as was the case in previous years.

Having aligned ourselves with the EU statement at this opening session, we wish to emphasize the common position that the crisis in and around Ukraine caused by Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea and destabilizing actions in Ukraine's Donbas poses a serious challenge to the European security order. As long as the conflict started by Russia is not resolved in full accordance with the OSCE principles and commitments, this challenge will remain present. The brutal violation of fundamental OSCE principles triggered multiple dangerous consequences that aggravate the security environment on the European continent. The ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine represents an affront to all OSCE participating States undermining confidence in the basic rules of peaceful co-existence between states, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, inviolability of frontiers, non-use of force or of threat of force.

The gravity of the challenge to security posed by the Russian Federation is inseparable from the record of the past behavior of this country towards its neighbours, in particular Russia's war against Georgia and illegal occupation of parts of territory of this country. Had the international response to Russia's intervention into Georgia been more firm and resolute in 2008, it could have prevented the proliferation of Russian aggressive intentions and military intervention of 2014. Aggression cannot be accommodated or tolerated and will bring no rewards to the

country that breaches the rules. This is a hard-learned lesson which must retain a central place in inter-state conflict prevention strategy and be communicated with clarity and resolve to the Russian leadership.

Maintaining international unity and solidarity around the basic principles of security and increasing the cost of Russia's aggression are the means of defence against attacks on territorial integrity and sovereignty of states and on the rules-based security order. Peaceful resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and restoration of respect to the Helsinki Final Act principles must remain in the priority focus of the OSCE. Other growing challenges, including terrorism, migration and threats in the cyber space, should not be allowed to distract our attention from this fundamental challenge. We support the progress of Structured Dialogue within the OSCE to deepen understanding of the security environment and help increase military transparency and predictability.

The last three years have made it painfully clear that peace and security cannot be taken for granted. We need to be ready to engage in dialogue to promote security as well as preserve determination to jointly take the necessary measures to prevent and resolve conflicts and ensure respect for the OSCE principles.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.