

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Dmytro KULEBA,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
at the 27th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
(Tirana, 3 December 2020)**

**Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This year marks a number of important commemorative dates for the OSCE and the participating States.

Today we should focus on the core business of the OSCE, that is the conflicts resolution and mitigation of their impact on the everyday life of our citizens.

I state with regret that this is the seventh OSCE Ministerial Council meeting, where Ukraine and the OSCE community place focus on the challenges of the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine for the entire OSCE region. As the aggression does not subside, I will again underscore the imperative of restoration of respect for the basic OSCE principles and commitments and undiminishing necessity to maintain pressure on Russia to make it change its behaviour. This must be part and parcel of our everyday work.

I commend the work of brave men and women of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, who have been monitoring the situation on the ground, including in the parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, temporarily occupied by Russia. The SMM observers continue registering the most modern Russian weapon systems, and the SMM UAVs keep spotting illegal crossings of the military vehicles from Russia into the sovereign territory of Ukraine. These activities were persistently undermined and obstructed by the Russian occupation forces.

We thank the 33 participating States, which joined us in co-sponsoring the Ministerial Decision draft on the OSCE permanent monitoring of the areas adjacent to the uncontrolled segment of the Ukrainian-Russian border. Establishment of such a permanent monitoring, a clear provision of the Minsk Protocol which Russia has also signed, could have become another practical response by the OSCE to the ongoing conflict. The blocking of this decision by one country, the Russian Federation, has again demonstrated the unwillingness of Moscow to honour its commitments under the Minsk agreements, to abide by the OSCE principles and to respect the borders in Europe.

The year 2020 was a special one for Ukraine. Our Chairmanship in the Forum for Security Cooperation provided a unique opportunity to remind the OSCE community of the most severe security challenges including those stemming from Russia's continued occupation and militarization of the Crimean Peninsula and its surrounding waters. It is our common interest to restore security and stability in the wider Azov-Black sea region. The UN General

Assembly resolution on this issue to be adopted next week in New York is aimed at achieving this goal, and I call on OSCE PA to support it.

To counter challenges caused by Russia's attempted annexation of the Crimean peninsula, and to achieve its de-occupation Ukraine has initiated the establishment of the Crimean Platform. Within this new international cooperation mechanism we will coordinate our activities to mitigate threats to security, economic prosperity and environment in Crimea, to remedy mass human rights violations and to address other problems.

I would like to thank countries who have already supported this initiative and call on other partners and friends to join us in this new format.

We are grateful to all our partners, which have been keeping high on the OSCE agenda the deteriorating situation with observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious, in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The cynical and systematic persecutions of dissenting voices by the occupying Power cannot be left without consequences.

I will be able to deliver more on this, including on the Crimean Platform, and to listen to your views at the side event "International response to Crimea's occupation: the next steps", which will be held a couple of hours later today.

Let me say it loud and clear: Ukraine remains committed to the peaceful resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Throughout the year 2020, we have demonstrated this resolve in practice, both in the Normandy format and in the Trilateral Contact Group. We encourage Russia to engage in discussing modalities of withdrawal of its forces from Crimea and parts of Donbas. We wish to end the conflict as soon as possible. We will never accept that Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, territorial integrity and sovereignty remain violated.

We urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, including by withdrawing its armed formations, mercenaries and their hardware from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

Mr. Chairperson,

We commend Albania for its dedicated efforts to steer the OSCE in this very hard year and organizing this Ministerial. We warmly welcome Sweden as the incoming Chairmanship, followed by Poland, close friends and partners of Ukraine. We support the bids submitted by North Macedonia and Estonia, with whom we also enjoy excellent bilateral relations, for the years 2023 and 2024.

With the decisions on the appointment of top-4 posts of the OSCE we recommit ourselves to the important mandates of the OSCE institutions. Their impartial, independent and faithful implementation will prove the relevance and strength of our Organization.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.