

OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine: UK response

Thank you Madam Chair. I would like to thank Ambassador Villadsen for his detailed briefing and excellent power point on the work of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine.

The UK very much appreciates the many and varied projects implemented by your office, and your office's integration into the international community's combined effort to support Ukraine. The UK will continue to cooperate with the OSCE and the broader international community in supporting Ukraine, including Ukraine's reform efforts, and in this context we look forward to the Ukraine Reform Conference which will take place in Vilnius on 7-8 July.

We welcome the strategic objectives you have outlined again today: to assist the Government's reform effort, promote a culture of dialogue and help mitigate the effects of conflict. On this occasion, I'd like to focus my statement on three areas, rule of law and human rights, mitigating the impacts of the conflict and some of your Mission's operational achievements.

We appreciate the PCU's contribution to the wider international effort to promote reforms that support the development of the rule of law in Ukraine, which is a central pillar of Ukraine's future prosperity and resilience. In particular, your support to the Law Reform Commission and its three working groups on criminal justice, constitutional law and judicial reform and the dialogue facilitated by the PCU between reform stakeholders, such as the discussion on lessons learned from anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine and the implications for the judiciary.

We value your various projects to support the provision of human rights education in schools and a human rights-based approach in higher education. The role of youth in democracy and upholding human rights must begin with a good education. This is the first step in creating inclusive and tolerant societies where the young have the opportunity to understand the value of democracy and human rights, and are able to recognise and challenge those who threaten it. We were grateful for the information you included in today's report about the ways in which PCU is promoting youth engagement and participation more broadly.

Sadly, the lives of many Ukrainian young people continue to be negatively affected by the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. The UK commends the PCU for its continued work supporting the Ukrainian government in mitigating the impacts of this Russian instigated and Russian fuelled conflict.

We are grateful for your support to the Ministry of Veteran Affairs in providing psycho-social assistance to veterans. Your work on humanitarian demining, has been critical – both the provision of training and facilitation of mine risk education and sharing international best practices. We also highly value your work on the Donbas Environmental Assessment, including the

analysis of various dam break scenarios in the most vulnerable conflict affected areas.

It is important to consider environmental issues both through support to the Government of Ukraine, such as the assessment I have just mentioned, but also through ensuring that the Mission's own activities promote sustainability. On that front, we congratulate your "Green Team" colleagues on their award and encourage you to continue adopting and sharing best practice in this area.

We also continue to commend how you have successfully adapted your activities and planning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was particularly impressive that the Mission was able to achieve a budget implementation rate of over 95 per cent despite the pandemic. This underlines the continued importance of ensuring that your Mission is provided with sufficient resources to administer your many projects and to maintain flexibility to respond to possible improvements in the COVID situation.

We welcome your adoption in March of an 'Action Plan for Implementing the Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality at the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. We also see the establishment of a Gender Focal Points Group under this action plan as a positive development. We firmly believe that integrating gender perspectives into the PCU's programmes and projects will increase the beneficial impact and effectiveness of the mission's work.

The UK remains committed to the long-term security, stability and prosperity of Ukraine. We thank the PCU for promoting reform across a broad range of issues, some of which have been highlighted today. Ambassador Villadsen, please accept our thanks for all the work conducted by you and your excellent team, and our very best wishes for your future endeavours.

Thank you Madam Chair.