

Work of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine: UK statement

Thank you Mr Chairperson. I would like to thank Ambassador Villadsen for his detailed briefing on the work of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU).

We are a firm supporter of the PCU. They do excellent work with the Ukrainian government, including on key areas such as civil society engagement, humanitarian demining, and implementing reform across Ukraine. It is unfortunate that alongside other international organisations, their ability to operate throughout the entire territory of Ukraine is restricted due to Russian interference. The PCU also had to adapt its activities to the Covid-19 pandemic. I commend Ambassador Villadsen and his team's efforts to ensure staff are protected and projects continue during this difficult time.

We welcome the PCU's introduction of a Gender Strategy, which includes measures related both to internal Mission procedures and to the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects. It is important that gender mainstreaming is integrated into all aspects of the PCU's work in order to increase its effectiveness and beneficial impact. I am therefore pleased to note that the PCU continues to make progress on this area and has provided additional training to their staff on gender-related topics.

The PCU's decision to focus 2019 as the Year of Mediation reinforced the importance of drawing on expertise from government and civil society stakeholders. Last year the UK was proud to support the PCU's project on Dialogue Reform and Social Cohesion in Ukraine, which enabled the training of 9,000 Ukrainian civil servants on dialogue facilitation techniques. We welcome the continued work in this area to promote dialogue and build bridges by advancing national mediation, dialogue and school mediation in 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in increased risks to cyber security. The PCU's focus in this area is extremely timely as the Government of Ukraine seeks to enhance its cyber security capabilities. This year, the UK will support the PCU to train Ukrainian civil servants on cyber security and better address shared cyber security threats. These issues not only affect Ukraine, but also the UK and many other participating States in this Permanent Council.

Another issue that has confronted many States during the pandemic has been the sharp increase in violence against women and girls. We welcome the PCU's decision to strengthen their prevention work on domestic violence. Adapting prevention measures and ensuring continued accessibility of essential support and services at this time can be life-saving.

Humanitarian demining remains another crucial area of focus this year. We applaud the PCU's work on demining to strengthen national mine action authorities and ensure mine risk education is provided to affected communities. More so than ever, environmental risks should be addressed.

Increased support to Ukrainian authorities on developing comprehensive legislation to improve chemical safety and security is a positive example of the PCU's engagement in Ukraine.

The UK remains committed to the long-term security, stability and prosperity of Ukraine. We commend the work of the PCU to promote reform across a broad range of issues, some of which have been highlighted today. We reiterate that the mandate of the PCU applies to all Ukrainian territory including in eastern Ukraine, and illegally annexed Crimea. We once again thank Ambassador Villadsen and his team for their work supporting Ukraine, and I wish them continued success.