UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
21 February 2017

Maintaining international peace and security: Conflicts in Europe

Statement by H.E. Ms Caitlin Wilson
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of Australia to the United Nations

As Delivered

Let me begin by offering our heartfelt condolences to the colleagues, family and friends of Ambassador Churkin following his sad and untimely passing. As has been noted, Ambassador Churkin was an accomplished diplomat and representative, and we will greatly miss his presence in the UN and particularly the UN Security Council where he has played a formative role over many years.

Mr President, while this Council spends much of its time on situations in Africa, today's debate reminds us that no region is immune from conflict.

International peace and security is something that we must work towards collectively.

The United Nations was created over 70 years ago for this purpose, following the World Wars that started in Europe.

Since 1945, Europe has shown an alternative is possible.
It has shown negotiation is more effective than conflict.

That cooperation yields more than nationalism.

That even implacable opponents can talk, negotiate, cooperate and unite if the political will is strong enough.

The international community cannot take for granted the stability and prosperity Europe has enjoyed for decades.

We must work hard to protect these achievements.

We now face a period of instability.
Where core principles of international law – the primacy of state sovereignty and territorial integrity – are under threat.

Australia remains deeply concerned that aggression against Ukraine has resulted in the unlawful, purported annexation of Crimea and conflict in Eastern Ukraine, which has already killed

nearly 10,000 people, including over 2,000 civilians. Implementation of the Minsk agreements remains an essential priority.

Over 2 million people have fled the region since April 2014 and over 1 million continue living in dire conditions near the frontline. This conflict created the conditions that led to the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 in July 2014, which Australia felt first hand along with several other countries.

The international community cannot forget this tragedy and we must ensure that those responsible are held to account. Australia is working closely with the Joint Investigation Taskforce countries to achieve this.

We remain concerned about threats to Georgia's territorial integrity.

It is critical that this Council take action to respond to acts of aggression, violations of territorial integrity, and the failure to settle disputes peacefully.

The Permanent Members of the Security Council have a particular obligation to lead by example when upholding the UN Charter's fundamental principles.

A threat to international peace and security in any part of the world is a threat to the entire international community.

In this context, we welcome the new Secretary General's commitment to utilising his powers under Article 99 of the UN Charter.

We also welcome continued cooperation between the Security Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as other regional organisations.

The OSCE has provided critical support in Ukraine and elsewhere, including helping to negotiate ceasefires and facilitating investigator access to the MH17 crash site.

Australia calls on the parties to Europe's conflicts to reflect again on the founding principles of the UN – peace and security, human rights, social progress, respect for sovereignty, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and cooperation among states.

At its core, we reinforce the importance of respect for the primacy of a rules-based international order.

This is as much the case in Europe as it is elsewhere in the world.