

**Christian Democratic Union of Poles in Vinnytsia on item IV
9th session of the Forum on Minority Issues - ohchr**

24/25 November 2016

Unites Nations - Geneva

Mr Chairperson, I am 2016 OHCHR Minority Rights fellow belonging to the Polish minority in Ukraine. In the result of the armed conflict executed by foreign military troops over the past two years more than 3,1 million Ukrainians are in need of humanitarian assistance and I have a question to the international community: Why has the armed conflict in Ukraine that enters into its 3rd year disappeared from global media front pages? When it comes to minority in humanitarian crises in Ukraine, the most exposed and endangered are the Crimean Tatars who are forced to flee their homes unless they opt for accepting the illegal occupation of Crimea and adjusting to violation of their rights. Being convinced that countries can only prosper and be less prone to conflicts when minority rights are preserved and the [recipe] constitutes state's priority, I have few recommendations to compliment what the Ukrainian government is already doing to diffuse further tensions in ethnic, regional and political polarisation. First, state bodies should pay more due attention to development and promotion of identity, language and culture of all the minorities in Ukraine, and I emphasize, of all the minorities in Ukraine. To do so, adequate financial support to NGOs should be provided irrespective of their status, be it local, regional or national NGO. Second, the department for religion and nationalities of the Ministry of Culture should be supported with sufficient human and financial resources. Third, capacity-building trainings for minority representatives should be established to equip them with knowing how to use the UN mechanisms and instruments to protect their rights and report when their rights are violated. Fourth, Ukraine should enhance its efforts and commitments towards the protection of the rights of Crimean Tatars especially when it comes to access to employment, social services, education for children in the Tatar language, settlement and their status as indigenous people. Mr President, the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol is defined by the UN General Assembly resolution 68/262 reaffirming integrity of Ukrainian territory, yet due to temporary occupation of its territory has no access to Crimea to monitor the state of human rights there. The Russian Federation since 2014 constantly refuses all the requests to let monitoring missions to Crimea, monitor human rights primarily those of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainian-speaking minority. The Russian Federation thus should provide OHCHR and other international human rights monitoring missions and NGOs with full access to territory of Crimea to monitor human rights. Let UN High Commissioner for Human Rights prepare thematic reports on the situation in the peninsula. I thank you Mr Chairperson.