



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
High Commissioner on National Minorities**

The Hague, 8 December 2009

**Mr. Jurij Darewych
Ukrainian World Congress
145 Evans Avenue
Toronto ON M8Z 5X8**

Dear Mr. Darewych,

Thank you for your letter and memorandum in which you set out your concerns regarding the situation of the Ukrainian minority in the Russian Federation.

Like my predecessors, I continue to follow this situation from the point of view of my conflict prevention mandate. As you may be aware, earlier this year I decided to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the situation in the minority language education of Ukrainians in Russia and of the educational situation of Russians in Ukraine. This study is a follow-up to the 2001 study commissioned by the then OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoep, mentioned in your letter. In view of the situation of the educational rights of the Ukrainian minority in Russia and the Russian minority in Ukraine, the purpose of the study was to ensure that discussions on minority rights in both countries focus on the factual situation and to facilitate a non-politicized dialogue between the two countries, and in so doing improve the implementation of the relevant minority rights by the respective State authorities.

Within the framework of this current study, I visited both the Russian Federation and Ukraine with my advisers and two independent international experts in the field of minority rights engaged to assist me. In Moscow, Ufa and Voronezh, the programme included meetings with officials of the federal, national and regional governments, with educational practitioners such as teachers, heads of schools and pedagogical and university institutions, and with pupils and parents as well as various representatives of non-governmental organizations of the Ukrainian minority in the specific regions. In Ukraine, I visited Kyiv, Donetsk, Lviv and Simferopol, where I also met with a diverse range of interlocutors representing national, regional and local authorities, educational authorities and structures and representatives of the Russian minority.

Subsequent to these visits, I shared my findings and recommendations on how to improve the

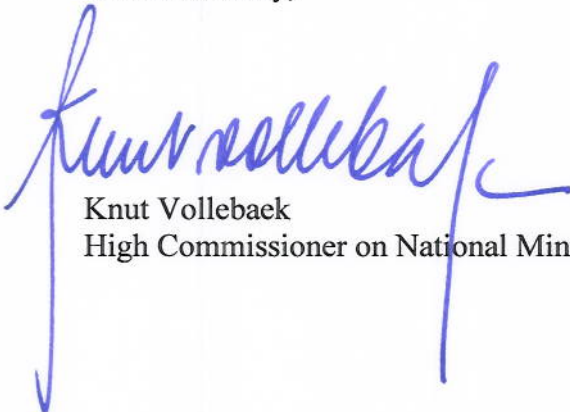
protection and promotion of the rights of the respective minorities with the two Governments.

As you may know, the 1992 OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities' mandate, which calls on me to act as an instrument of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage, equally imposes a strict condition of confidentiality. This quiet diplomacy approach is meant to reconcile the need to establish such an office in the first place with the importance of avoiding any possible escalation that might be caused by the High Commissioner's involvement. In this climate of confidential conversations, parties directly involved often feel they can be more co-operative because they know that the discussions will not be revealed to the outside world. Conversely, in the public arena parties may make more extreme statements from the presumption that they should be seen to be maintaining a strong position or that they should try to exploit outside attention

While this condition of confidentiality prevents me from informing you about the precise recommendations I issued to the Governments of Ukraine and the Russian Federation, I am happy to share with you more general information on the study through an address via "YouTube", which is available at: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbCuYWjfgVA>>.

The information you have recently provided and any other insights you may provide on future occasions will certainly assist me in this task.

Yours sincerely,



Knut Vollebaek
High Commissioner on National Minorities