

JOINT SESSION OF THE THREE GENERAL COMMITTEES WINTER MEETING 2023
Friday 24 February 2023, 09:00 – 12:00

General Debate: *One Year In: Russia's Continued Full-Scale War on Ukraine*

**Address by Mr Ciprian Titi STOICA,
Member of the Romanian Delegation to the OSCE PA**

- I would like to start by mentioning that today, Romanians celebrate love. February 24 is our own "Valentine's Day" – a traditional day for lovers across our nation.
- That is why I want to emphasize that contrary to the Marxist rhetoric, nationalism is not about hatred or superiority. When framed within Christian morality, **nationalism centers on love.**
- On this occasion, **we condemn war once again.** We stand **firmly against** every violent involvement of a country in another country's internal affairs.
- After decades of separation between West and East, Europe finally got to live in democracy. But exactly one year ago, our stability and unity were shaken by **Russia's decision to invade Ukraine.**
- Europe has reacted correctly and imposed sanctions. According to the spirit of these sanctions, some distinguished MPs **should not be allowed here today.** They represent the interests of an aggressor, so they are against what all of us stand for.
- At the same time, democracy tells us **to protect national minorities** – especially **historical** minorities. Unfortunately, the Romanian minority in Ukraine is still a victim of the **Ribbentrop-Molotov pact**, after more than **80 years.**
- The actual legislation in Ukraine restrains Romanians from **Northern Bukovina, Herța, and Southern Bessarabia** to use their native language in schools, churches and media. **This situation has to be changed.**

- Also, democracy tells us **to protect the environment**. As you know, the Danube Delta is a unique ecosystem. That is why Romania and Ukraine are part of several international treaties that aim to protect this area. Unfortunately, **the Ukrainian Government does not understand** that each attempt of enlarging and developing the **Bystroe Channel** is harming the environment in the entire area.
- Identifying alternative routes for the transport of Ukrainian products is necessary, **but without destroying the Delta**. Even since 2008, European Commissioner for Environment, Mr. Stavros Dimas, said that the Bystroe project is one of the factors that **can endanger** the unique ecosystem of the Danube Delta.
- I would finish by paraphrasing Thomas Friedman: No two countries that both have a McDonald's should ever fight a war against each other. We should work together for a strong Europe of Nations, based on **love, freedom, faith and family**.

Hopefully, in one year, we will find ourselves living in peace. As a Romanian, I also hope we will be **together in Schengen** and that reality will matter more than unjustified, political decisions which do not benefit either of our countries. Only love can help us move forward. God bless all our Nations!