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**STATEMENT BY MR. YANN HWANG,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE
OSCE, AT THE 1064th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 August 2015

**In response to the briefing by Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan,
Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

While we fully align ourselves with the European Union statement and thank Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan for his presentation, we should like to make some additional remarks in our national capacity.

The latest developments on the ground are indeed very worrying when the Minsk process remains, in spite of many difficulties, the framework for seeking a political settlement. As the Permanent Council knows, France is sparing no effort to reach an agreement on the status of areas held by the separatists and the holding of local elections, observed by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, in accordance with the Minsk agreements. Our time-frame is certainly ambitious, but we have no other option but to succeed. Rest assured that an escalation of the violence would benefit no one.

However, it is the ever-deteriorating security conditions in which the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) is operating that are the focus of our attention today. The attacks to which the Mission has been subjected in the past few weeks, such as those related by Ambassador Apakan a moment ago, can no longer be tolerated. Because by physically and verbally abusing members of the Mission, by preventing patrols from moving freely in the areas concerned, by calling into question their impartiality, it is the Mission's mandate, which was adopted and renewed right here, that is violated; it is the international community in its entirety that is affected. Our monitors were mandated by all of us, and nothing can justify their integrity being compromised, just as it is unacceptable for them to be prevented from carrying out their work.

Mr. Ambassador, we have noted your report that certain demonstrations by the civilian population against the SMM were not spontaneous. We have also taken note that the population may have been exploited. That is a very worrying point which must be addressed. These are tactics that we condemn in the strongest terms; they are neither dignified nor in keeping with international law.

Under the Normandy format, France will continue, with Germany, to put pressure on all parties to the conflict to respect their commitments to ensuring free movement, access to the OSCE Mission and the security of its members, and to refrain from any harmful escalation. We call on Russia in particular to exercise all its responsibilities in relation to the separatists.

Finally, we recall our commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson