

**Concluding Remarks by  
Ambassador Alexander Marschik  
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Affairs of Austria**

**Special PC Meeting  
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Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This was a good debate. We are grateful for the contributions by our guests and the active participation by delegations. The crisis in and around Ukraine will remain high on the agenda. We will make sure that this debate will feed into our efforts in dealing with the crisis.

Allow me the concluding observations by the Chairmanship:

"We are deeply concerned by continued violence and the use of heavy weapons in Eastern Ukraine. We join the numerous delegations in their call for full observance of the renewed ceasefire as reconfirmed by the Trilateral Contact Group on 29 March 2017 as well as full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The suffering of civilians and the devastating humanitarian impact of the crisis was deplored by all of us. Together with Ambassadors Sajdik and Apakan as well as the international humanitarian actors on the ground, we call for the immediate cessation of hostilities, an end to shelling of inhabited areas, for more crossing points on the line of contact, greater freedom of movement and demining. Furthermore, humanitarian assistance should be facilitated and full access to conflict-affected areas should be granted to international humanitarian organizations.

We join Ambassadors Apakan and Sajdik in their call for urgent measures like safe zones to ensure safety of critical infrastructure in order to reduce the risk of ecological and environmental damage.

We want to reiterate the full support for the work of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) expressed by all delegations and also our gratitude to the Chief Monitor and all SMM staff who are working under difficult conditions.

Threats against SMM members, restrictions on their freedom of movement, as well as destruction of OSCE assets have been condemned. SMM members must have safe and secure access throughout Ukraine to fulfil their mandate. We expect this commitment to be respected, including by creating the conditions to establish further forward patrol bases and hubs.

We join delegations in their call for the proper investigation of incidents targeting the SMM. Those responsible must be held accountable. We need to explore new mechanisms, based on international experiences like joint military commissions and incident response mechanisms in order to strengthen accountability, resolve disputes and build trust.

We all need to publicly speak up and support our Mission. And, actions and statements that undermine the work and the security and safety of the monitors are not acceptable.

In order to bolster security, we support to the calls on the sides to intensify and accelerate the disengagement process in accordance with the provisions of the Framework Decision of the Trilateral Contact Group relating to disengagement of forces and hardware of 21 September 2016.

Like many delegations we support the efforts of the Normandy format to contribute to a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

We are reassured by the support expressed for the central role of the Trilateral Contact Group, assisted by its working groups in facilitating the practical implementation of the Minsk agreements. Delegations have reconfirmed their

full support for the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and the Co-ordinators of the four working groups. We also want to express our appreciation for the good offices provided by Belarus in hosting the meetings.”