



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR APAKAN

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 13 July 2015

Madam and Mr Chair,

We thank Ambassador Apakan for his comprehensive and honest report.

We note his assessment that the situation on the ground is not improving. However, this should only motivate us for even stronger involvement, because of the possible wider repercussions of the crisis for European security. But also because – as Ambassador Apakan’s report illustrates – of the human suffering in Eastern Ukraine.

We have been clear on where the primary responsibility for the crisis in and around Ukraine is to be found. The Russian Federation holds the key to the resolution of the conflict.

Chairs,

We are pleased to see that the SMM has finally reached 500 monitors. Norway currently has 10 monitors on the ground, and the ambition is to increase this to 15. We are ready to provide a new voluntary financial contribution to the SMM should this prove necessary.

Chairs,

We thank Ambassador Apakan for maintaining security as the “number one priority of the operations of the SMM”. Serious incidents involving SMM monitors are cause for great concern and show the necessity of putting security first. We call on all parties to ensure the safety and security of the monitors.

We welcome the many measures the SMM has taken to improve security, including medical capabilities, technical equipment, and the use of strategic communication to improve its reputation. Assessments made by external experts and those of individual OSCE participating States are of great value, not only for the SMM, also for us.

Chairs,

SMM reports show the extremely limited access the mission has to separatist controlled areas, and that access to separatist controlled parts of the state border is completely cut off. This is unacceptable and makes it extremely difficult – if not impossible – for the SMM to do its job as defined by the Mandate and the Minsk documents.

We note Ambassador Apakan's points on the JCCC. From his report, it is clear that the "J" in JCCC is missing. We ask ourselves whether the JCCC is now fulfilling a useful function.

Chairs,

In his report, Ambassador Apakan points to the humanitarian needs in areas controlled by the separatists, and to limitations on humanitarian access to these areas. We call on all parties to ensure unrestricted access for humanitarian actors, and to provide humanitarian aid in accordance with international humanitarian principles.

Chairs,

We agree with previous speakers that the FSC could contribute to the implementation of the SMM mandate. As the SMM increasingly resembles a peacekeeping operation, with ceasefire monitoring, facilitation of local ceasefires and demining efforts, etc., we believe the SMM could benefit from drawing on the tools and expertise of the FSC. Norway will chair the FSC in the last trimester of this year. We stand ready to help facilitate further discussions on this issue.

Chairs,

We need now to intensify the debate on our crisis response capabilities. In this, we must learn from our engagement in Ukraine, and carefully consider the recommendations put forward by the Panel of Eminent Persons. Nevertheless, we must not fool ourselves. There is no way we can make our organisation stronger by continuing the zero nominal growth policy of the last decade.

Thank you.