

**Presentation by the OSCE CiO Special Representative, Amb. Martin Sajdik, in the  
OSCE Permanent Council  
Vienna, 1 December 2016**

Today is the fifth and probably last time during the German Chairmanship that you kindly invited Amb Apakan and me to the Permanent Council to inform you about our efforts and views on a peaceful settlement of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Therefore I would like to thank the German Chairmanship for the continuous interest in our work and for the outstanding support throughout the year.

The coincidence that this year the CiO is also a member and one driving force of the Normandy format has had a positive effect for us. Our process is the child of the Normandy format. We rely on its continuous support and guidance. I have already talked to you about the need to develop a “package” with an authoritative sequence of the security and political elements of Minsk. I welcome that the Normandy format is pursuing this idea by negotiating a “roadmap”. It would give a huge impetus to our process.

For the second year we have managed to keep the Minsk process on track despite an increasingly complex environment. We owe this to a very large extent to the extraordinary skillfulness and perseverance of the four Working group Coordinators. I am sincerely grateful for their tireless efforts!

Our most important achievement – and raison d’être of our work – remains a significant reduction in civilian casualties: the number of killed civilians has decreased by roughly two third this year. . But still people get killed, get wounded - among the latter during last months also children - on both sides of the line of contact.

We have directed our efforts towards a zero target, towards eliminating casualties among the civilian population. To truly alleviate the plight of civilians in the conflict is the Coordinators' common goal.

The **WG on Security**, under the wise leadership of Amb Ertugrul Apakan, negotiated three additional agreements: the TCG decisions on mine action and on the prohibition of live-fire exercises (both signed in March 2016) and the TCG framework decision on disengagement of forces and hardware (21 September).

The sides' performance in implementing those and previous security agreements leaves ample space for improvement. The ceasefire continues to be violated. The OSCE SMM continues to observe widespread non-compliance in particular with regard to the

withdrawal of heavy and Addendum-regulated weapons. Those weapons and mines are responsible for most of the civilian casualties.

We have urged the sides to establish accountability with regard to a worrying number of incidents directed against staff and equipment of the SMM. Harassment and freedom of movement restrictions must not be tolerated.

Disengagement has only made progress in two areas. The sides are called upon to urgently establish the necessary conditions for disengagement in Stanitsya Luhanska, the third area foreseen.

Successful disengagement in the three trial areas would be highly beneficial for building trust, which is so important for moving forward with the implementation of the other elements of Minsk.

In the **Political WG**, in the course of fifty-one sessions, its Coordinator, Amb Pierre Morel, has compiled tremendous expertise on the modalities for local elections in certain areas of Luhansk region and Donetsk region. Morel has also discussed amnesty and, more recently, the implementation of the so-called “Steinmeier formula” on the enactment of the law on Special order of self-governance. Morel rightly sees his group as a “laboratory” which has laid the groundwork for discussions in the Normandy format. I support Morel’s call to receive, in return, appropriate guidance from the Normandy format on the specific issues to be elaborated within his group in the next sessions.

I have often stressed that although security and political issues are of major importance, **humanitarian questions** should not fade into the background. I welcome that the leaders and foreign ministers of the Normandy format, during their recent meetings, devoted special attention to those issues.

Thanks to this, but certainly also thanks to the strong personal engagement and persistence of the Coordinator of the Humanitarian WG, Amb Toni Frisch, we have seen some positive developments. Access to detainees on non-government controlled territory is improving. Last week we welcomed the decision of the Ukrainian authorities to raise the weight limit for goods carried across the contact line and to deploy more personnel in order to speed up clearance procedures at crossing points. But much more decisive steps are necessary:

The release and transfer of detainees has to continue. The ICRC must have full and unimpeded access to all detainees on both sides of the contact line.

Passage of the civilian population across the line of contact (in the average some 25,000 people every day!) has to be further improved, including by swiftly opening the crossing

point Zolote and concluding the urgent rehabilitation works on the access to the bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska.

With the onset of winter – the third winter in the conflict – the humanitarian situation of some 3 Mio Ukrainians is likely to further worsen. Yet only a few days ago, one of the last humanitarian organizations working in certain areas of Donetsk region has been revoked its license. It is crucial that all humanitarian organizations are allowed to work efficiently on either side of the contact line.

Humanitarian and **economic issues** are closely intertwined. Until September, the Economic WG led by Mr Per Fischer had constructive discussions on many important topics, among them rehabilitation of the electrical grid, reintegration of the railway, resumption of coal transports, social payments and property issues. A major achievement was the establishment of a new legal and commercial basis for the Karbonyt water supply system. A contract between water companies from Government controlled area and certain areas of Luhansk region was concluded back in August.

But an additional annex to this contract regulating payment mechanisms has still to be finalized, and bills have finally to be paid, in order to prevent a cut of water supply and heating for up to 1.2 Mio people in the midst of winter.

The ICRC undertook to pay those bills for two months. The deadline has run out precisely today, and the sides are still unable to overcome the paralysis of the Economic WG.

Having used every possible channel to facilitate a way out of this crisis, I can only repeat my call to the sides to find a pragmatic solution. At the same time, the Economic WG should resume its work as soon as possible.

The people in eastern Ukraine expect results from the Minsk process. They expect the sides to understand their plight and to show the necessary political will to implement the Minsk agreements.

Thank you very much for your kind attention and your continued support for our work.