



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO THE BRIEFINGS GIVEN BY

AMBASSADOR ÇEVİK AND MR RICCO ON BEHALF OF AMBASSADOR GRAU

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen  
at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 4 February 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chair,

I would like to join others in thanking Ambassadors Çevik and Mr Ricco for their reports, and also for the valuable work they and their teams continue to carry out.

The work in the TCG is invaluable in bringing the parties closer together with the aim to make life better for the people living in the east of Ukraine. The sharp reduction in the number of ceasefire violations observed by the SMM since the strengthened ceasefire entered into force on 27 July has been a major achievement. The tendency of increasing violations towards the end of the reporting period is, however, worrying. Norway calls on all parties to uphold their commitments in order to consolidate the ceasefire and engage constructively towards resolving the conflict.

Civilians continue to face restrictions at crossing points. Some choose to face the dangers and burdens of crossing. However, the majority have no choice but to desist from collecting pensions, seeking medical treatment, caring for relatives or carrying out

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other necessary activities. We call on all parties to ensure the opening of the existing crossing points and to effectively enable crossings at Zolote and Shchastia.

Furthermore, mines, UXO and other explosive devices continue to pose a grave threat to civilians, and to limiting the SMM's freedom of movement. Once again, we call on all parties to refrain from laying mines and to contribute to mine clearance, recalling obligations under the Mine Ban Convention and other relevant instruments.

Despite the SMM's measures to protect its members and the population from COVID-19, the pandemic is frequently used to justify restrictions on the mission's freedom of movement, particularly in non-government-controlled areas. We call on all parties to enable the SMM to fulfil its mandate by providing unhindered access. We urge the Russian Federation to use its considerable influence on the armed formations it backs to ensure that the SMM's freedom of movement is respected. SMMs cameras and other technical assets should not be damaged. This is essential for the SMM's ability to provide an impartial picture of the security situation in Ukraine, and to contribute to reducing tensions and promoting stability, as mandated.

SMM continues to be the only international presence in (Eastern) Ukraine, representing us all. We appreciate the work that you do and the information that you provide, including through reporting to the Permanent Council.

Mr Chair,

The conflict in Ukraine has been ongoing for almost seven years. It continues to be a serious threat to security and stability in Europe. As such it must remain high on the OSCE's agenda.

In January, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde chose to pay her first visit in that capacity to Ukraine. Norway welcomes her statement that the visit reflected the high importance the Swedish Chairpersonship places on contributing to a peaceful resolution, including full respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including the Crimean Peninsula and the adjoining territorial waters. A sentiment that has been reiterated numerous times by Norway in the Permanent Council.

We also agree that the full inclusion and empowerment of women is crucial in preventing and mitigating conflicts and consolidating peace.

Thank you.