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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1007th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 July 2014

**In response to the report by Mr. Ertuğrul Apakan,
Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan to today's Permanent Council meeting. We thank Ambassador Apakan for his full report on the work of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

Although the field presence has only been operating for four months, a great deal has been achieved. Most importantly, the Mission is now the largest international presence in Ukraine and a very important stabilizing influence. Working contact has been established with representatives both of the authorities and of the forces that control the situation on the ground. The Mission's reports are consistently becoming more substantive and balanced; they have started to reflect the problems and concerns of various groups in Ukraine. All of this undoubtedly helps to increase the Mission's credibility, including in the eyes of those in the conflict zone.

The efforts of the Mission to establish contact with various forces in Ukraine greatly contributed to the release of all eight members of the Special Monitoring Mission, including one Russian citizen. An important role was played by a personal appeal by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and the actions of Metropolitan Mercury. We welcome the release of the observers, and particularly the fact that it took place without preconditions or other demands.

We support the work of the field presence to reduce tensions and to ensure peace, stability and security in Ukraine. We are also making our contribution to strengthening the Special Monitoring Mission: from the outset, Russians have been working within the field presence. The OSCE Secretariat has received further applications from Russians. We support Ukraine's request to extend the Mission's mandate in its existing form for a further six months.

The priority today is to reach a sustainable and lasting peace in Ukraine. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, operating within its mandate, could monitor its observance, and record and report all violations by any party.

Russia supports expanding the observation activities of the Special Monitoring Mission in the regions where it is already present. We note the attention which is now being paid to the humanitarian situation and the repercussions of actions by Ukrainian security forces. The spot reports of the Special Monitoring Mission of 28 June and 9 July, in particular, mention the difficult situation in Sloviansk, including the destruction of buildings and infrastructure as a result of heavy artillery strikes.

Stepping up the monitoring activities of the Special Monitoring Mission must go hand in hand with ensuring the safety of its observers. Questions related to the movement and personal safety of Mission staff need to be thoroughly addressed. The observers must maintain close operational contact with the forces that control the situation on the ground and agree upon travel itineraries with them.

At the same time, we affirm that obstructing the movement of OSCE Mission members and forcibly detaining them is unacceptable. Bans on visits to specific towns and villages should be mentioned in Mission reports. Such steps would improve the safety of Special Monitoring Mission staff, helping them to reach the scene of events on time, and, through their very presence, to facilitate de-escalation.

We urge the OSCE Mission to step up its work on reports from members of the public regarding violations of their rights. This would mean that observers were far better informed and would improve public confidence in them. As far as we understand, there is still no single Special Monitoring Mission hotline accessible to all Ukrainian citizens, and particularly Russian speakers.

Greater care in media relations would also help raise the Mission's credibility. Unfortunately, in spite of our repeated calls, press releases are still copied and pasted word-for-word from the reports intended for participating States.

At the same time, it is vital that the reports include not only information about events in eastern Ukraine, but also more detailed information about the situation in Dnipropetrovsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv or Chernivtsi. Recent Special Monitoring Mission reports lead one to believe either that nothing is happening in western regions, or that the observers never leave their offices and do not read the newspapers. However, reports of the activities of Right Sector activists who are trying to influence the local authorities and calling for the removal of "inconvenient" civil servants even appear in Ukrainian regional media outlets. Volunteers are being recruited to paramilitary structures where they are trained to be sent to the east. Nationalist propaganda is being spread. Do the Special Monitoring Mission observers really fail to see this?

We believe that the Mission would also do well to try a new format and release a weekly analytical review report on the situation in one of the regions of Ukraine where it operates. Particular attention should be paid to cases of racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, violent extremism and other forms of ethnic and religious intolerance.

Another important facet of the Special Monitoring Mission's work is monitoring and publicizing the results of investigations into acts of violence. The tragedies in Odessa and Mariupol, the air strikes on Luhansk, and the murder of civilians, including women and children, should not be forgotten. We believe that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission has a mandate and the capacity to support and publicize investigations into these and other events that represent violations of international humanitarian law.

The Mission should also not lose sight of other areas of its work, such as promoting dialogue on the ground, monitoring the circumstances of political prisoners and working for their release, and ensuring that the rights of national minorities are respected.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Ambassador Apakan for his tireless work for the Ukrainian people, and wish him and his team success in their laudable task.

Thank you for your attention.