



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT ON THE SPECIAL MONITORING MISSION IN UKRAINE
AND ON UKRAINE**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 18 February 2016

Mr Chairman,

I aligned myself with the statement made by the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union. The remarks I now wish to make in my national capacity relate also to agenda item 2, the decision to extend the mandate of the SMM. I therefore recall that I also aligned myself with the interpretative statement on SMM mandate extension, made by the Netherlands on behalf of the EU.

Mr Chairman,

We underline the shared responsibility of all to ensure that the SMM is able to implement its mandate. Ukraine, Russia, and the separatists it backs, must ensure full and unimpeded access for the SMM to all parts of Ukraine's internationally recognized territory, including Crimea. They must also guarantee the safety and security for SMM personnel. We appreciate that Chief Monitor Apakan has defined safety and security for the monitors a top priority.

We will continue to support the Mission, including by nominating qualified personnel. As of today there are 14 Norwegian secondees in the SMM.

Mr Chairman,

The SMM's reporting has continued to improve since the mission's inception. We welcome this. SMM reporting now make it crystal clear that the separatists are responsible for the overwhelming majority of access restrictions and security incidents. Recent incidents, such as this week at Kominternove and Debaltseve, are deeply concerning and completely unacceptable.

Mr Chairman,

We fully support the SMM's ongoing expansion to enable a better follow-up of the Minsk agreements. Ceasefire monitoring and verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons and foreign forces should continue to be the mission's main focus. At the same time, monitoring of the humanitarian and human rights situation, especially in the conflict zone, should also be given priority. This is not only a core part of the SMM's mandate, it is directly relevant for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, not least in relation to future local elections in areas beyond the control of the Ukrainian government.

Mr Chairman,

On the SMM budget I would like to note that the SMM represents a core activity of our organization. Core activities should primarily be financed through assessed contributions, with an opening for voluntary contributions, when appropriate. There are strong indications that potential donors have less money to contribute this year. This includes my own country.

We are concerned that the 80-20 split between assessed and voluntary contributions will lead to financial insecurity for the SMM.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.