



## **“A Roadmap for concrete steps forward: The OSCE as an inclusive platform and impartial actor for stability in Ukraine”**

**Bern, 12.05.2014 - Brussels, 12 May 2014 - Speech by the President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr Didier Burkhalter, at the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union - Check against delivery**

High Representative  
Ministers  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I appreciate the opportunity to address you as Chairman of the OSCE and to discuss with you the way forward to de-escalate the Ukraine crisis.

We have reached a pivotal moment in this crisis, both for Ukraine and for Europe. There is an urgent need to move from the logic of escalation to the logic of cooperation – and to do so now. Time is of the essence.

I have come here to outline a result-oriented Roadmap that the Swiss Chairmanship of the OSCE worked out last week and to explain what we have done so far to implement it. Your support in advancing these activities as quickly as possible would be appreciated and very helpful.

Since day one of the Swiss Chairmanship, the Ukraine crisis has topped the OSCE agenda. The OSCE was present in Ukraine before the crisis began. As the crisis unfolded, we stepped up OSCE activities. The decision by the 57 participating States to establish a Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine was a milestone in this regard. Firm support by EU Member States helped get the necessary consensus.

The Geneva Statement issued on 17 April by the EU, the United States, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation was another important effort to prevent further escalation. We were full of hope that this agreement would be a turning point and show us the way out of the crisis. But despite the steps undertaken by the Ukrainian government to implement the Geneva Statement, the situation has deteriorated further in parts of the country. Hostages have been taken, administrative buildings seized by armed groups, and people injured and killed.

On 25 May, Ukraine will hold early presidential elections. We want to support Ukraine as much as possible in maintaining an environment that is conducive to holding free and fair elections throughout the country. It is therefore time to change gears once more. Not just for the OSCE, but for everyone involved in efforts to stabilise the situation in Ukraine – and especially for the four participants in Geneva.

The OSCE Roadmap that we distributed last Wednesday simultaneously to Ukraine, Russia, the EU, and the US was drafted out of a sense of urgency.

A sense of urgency because there was neither tangible de-escalation after 17 April nor consensus among the Geneva Four on how to proceed with implementation – and time was fast running out.

A sense of urgency also because after high-level contacts with all sides we concluded that if we proceeded pragmatically there was now a window of opportunity. Even in the absence of agreement on the causes and drivers of this crisis, we can take measures to ensure de-escalation.

The Roadmap is an offer to the Geneva participants. It identifies measures for the OSCE to help operationalise the Geneva Statement and to give new impetus to its implementation. We do not have to agree on every detail. But we need to agree to take action and implement some measures immediately. We cannot afford to lose time.

Our Roadmap has four parts, which can be summarised in four terms: non-violence, disarmament, national dialogue, and elections.

Let me briefly outline these four parts and define the OSCE's role in each:

First, all sides must refrain from violence, intimidation, and provocative actions.

It is important that the four parties to the Geneva Statement remain committed to this message and express it publicly and at the highest political level.

All acts of violence must be promptly investigated and prosecuted. The OSCE Monitoring Mission is setting up Rapid Response Teams with specific areas of expertise and will assist Ukrainian authorities upon request. The task of these teams is to establish and report facts on specific incidents. A hotline for alerting the Monitoring Mission should be running soon.

Ukrainian authorities face a challenging task. They have to cope with grave violations of law and order and criminal acts in some parts of the country. At the same time, they have to remain responsive to legitimate political requests. If parts of Ukrainian society feel alienated from government, this is also because governance deficits have long been ignored.

It is imperative that the Ukrainian authorities respond in an appropriate manner to this challenge. And it is important that we support them in this task. While we emphasise the legitimacy of peaceful protest we also acknowledge the right of the government to use force to protect people and infrastructure against violent acts. We emphasise that any such use of force must be proportionate.

The referendum held yesterday in some localities in eastern Ukraine was incompatible with the Ukrainian constitution and therefore illegal. It is the sort of provocative act that must be avoided. The Roadmap calls on the four parties to refrain from actions that contravene Ukrainian law. It is important that this referendum does not get international acknowledgement.

The first part of the Roadmap also refers to the Geneva provision on the amnesty law. The Roadmap proposes that the Ukrainian Parliament ensure the immediate adoption of such a law. Amnesty should be granted to protesters and those who have left buildings and other public places and surrendered weapons, with the exception of those found guilty of capital crimes.

Adopting such an amnesty would be an important confidence-building measure and a precondition for implementing some of the de-escalation measures agreed in Geneva. It is important that the amnesty law be drafted with care to ensure that it facilitates the return of buildings and disarmament.

This brings me to the second part of the Roadmap: The OSCE Monitoring Mission is stepping up its efforts to assist the Ukrainian authorities and local communities in the immediate implementation of de-escalation measures.

Measures that facilitate de-escalation and reinforce stability must now be prioritised. The OSCE Monitoring Mission is reinforcing its capabilities accordingly. We are gradually expanding the size of the Mission. Currently, we have around 200 international staff. We continue to scale up the mission. We are paying particular attention to recruiting staff with mediation expertise.

The core task of the Mission remains fact-finding and objective reporting on the security situation. Daily reports and spot reports on major incidents are communicated to OSCE participating States. The Mission is also a valuable source of objective information for the public. We are working hard to make this service even faster and more comprehensive.

But additional support can now be offered for mediation in contacts with illegally armed groups. These contacts involve issues such as disarmament, the release of hostages, the return of illegally seized buildings, illegally occupied streets and squares, explaining the amnesty law, peaceful protests, and participation in round tables. The Monitoring Mission keeps running lists of occupied buildings and abducted individuals.

The OSCE also offers Ukraine support in developing and overseeing a national disarmament programme. This programme should target all illegally armed groups throughout the country to help restore the state's monopoly of force. Disarmament experts from the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey and from Germany are ready to travel to Kiev tomorrow in order to discuss next steps and identify what support is needed. The OSCE Secretariat is setting up a trust fund to finance such a programme.

The third part of the Roadmap is about establishing a broad national dialogue. This is a measure on which I sense there is convergence and support among all four Geneva participants. Reaching out to all of Ukraine's regions and political constituencies will help reverse the polarisation of Ukrainian society. Broad debate about issues such

as decentralisation and the status of the Russian language is indispensable for an inclusive, transparent, and accountable constitutional process.

Obviously, it is up to the Ukrainian authorities to decide on a national dialogue – and how to conduct it. It is encouraging that preparations for such a dialogue are under way.

The Roadmap makes some proposals concerning such a dialogue and how the OSCE can be of assistance. Let me mention three points:

First, we propose to launch immediately, and with the support of the OSCE, a series of public high-level Round Tables. These Round Tables should bring together leading representatives from national government authorities, the Ukrainian Parliament, and representatives from the regions. We will start with a pilot in a couple of days. Based on this experience, we can refine the concept and organise further Round Tables in different regions.

Second, we suggest appointing a bipartisan Ukrainian public figure as a moderator for the High-level Round Tables and an OSCE representative as co-moderator.

I am pleased to inform you that the Ukrainian government has accepted our proposal to nominate Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger as OSCE co-moderator for these Round Tables. I hope that we will have confirmation by this evening from Kiev on who is going to be Mr Ischinger's Ukrainian counterpart.

I wish to thank Ambassador Ischinger for his willingness to take on this important assignment. His broad experience will no doubt be an invaluable asset to move the National Dialogue forward. The Swiss Chairmanship also wishes to express its gratitude to Germany for seconding Ambassador Ischinger.

The third item of our proposal for National Dialogue is to complement High-Level Round Tables with inclusive public town hall meetings and strong involvement of the national parliament in each region. This measure should continue beyond election day and become part and parcel of the constitutional process. Such town hall meetings will allow for a broader consideration of people's needs and concerns. Again, the OSCE is ready to assist.

The fourth and final part of the Roadmap is to hold early presidential elections on 25 May.

Free and fair elections in accordance with internationally agreed standards are essential to stabilise the situation.

At Ukraine's invitation, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights will observe these elections. 100 long-term observers are already deployed throughout the regions. An additional 900 short-term observers will be deployed shortly before the elections. They will monitor the opening of polling stations, voting, the counting of ballots, and the tabulation of results at all levels. On election day, ODIHR will join efforts with a delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and other parliamentary partners. This will be one of ODIHR's biggest election observation missions in its history.

Our Roadmap suggests that the first or second election date might be used to also have a nation-wide (perhaps consultative) plebiscite on major issues of the National Dialogue. It could be an opportunity to reflect on first key findings and recommendations from the Round Tables and set some important benchmarks for the constitutional process going forward. This, again, is entirely up to Ukrainians to decide. The OSCE is ready to assist if Ukraine wishes it to do so.

Dear colleagues

The OSCE Roadmap is no blueprint for peace. But it proposes a way forward to de-escalate the situation and move from the logic of escalation to the logic of cooperation.

The Roadmap is an opportunity. The current window of opportunity is likely to be short.

The OSCE can help. The OSCE is not a party to the conflict. It is neither East nor West. Rather, it is an inclusive platform and an impartial actor for stability in Ukraine. Its impartiality is reinforced with Switzerland as Chair. This is double impartiality.

The OSCE can deliver – if the participating States enable it do so and provide support.

EU countries play a seminal role in this regard. The Swiss Chairmanship is grateful for your contributions. We can now enhance our cooperation and help Ukraine de-escalate the situation.

The Monitoring Mission needs additional qualified monitors, mediators, and disarmament experts. It also needs a lot more funding. I call on all participating States to support the OSCE engagement in Ukraine – and to support the OSCE logic of cooperation and reconstruction.

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