



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR APAKAN AND SAJDIK

As delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 4 October 2016

Mr Chair,

I aligned myself with the statement made on behalf of the EU. But let me make a few additional remarks.

We continue to fully support the important efforts of the SMM and the Trilateral Contact Group. They have brokered and monitored numerous ceasefires – and they have worked tirelessly to make these ceasefires sustainable. All parties must implement the agreements promptly and in good faith. Recent positive developments in the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Disengagement must be followed by further steps.

SMM-reports show that access continues to be systematically blocked, also in the disengagement areas. We deeply regret the increased use of mines and mine hazard signs to limit access for the SMM. All factors limiting the SMM's access must be removed immediately. Agreement on further disengagement areas should follow without delay.

Real progress is, however, dependent on increased political will. We sincerely hope sufficient headway is achieved along the Minsk-track and on the ground to ensure that the planned Normandy summit can take place later this month.

Mr Chair,

As a sign of our support and commitment, we will continue to engage with the SMM on certain organisational challenges. Ambassador Apakan's focus on security is, as we also heard today, highly appreciated and necessary. We need a mission that safeguards our monitors. That also requires a mission that treats monitors with the respect they deserve, and it requires a conduct, – including vis-à-vis the local population, – that is correct and accountable. Improper conduct cannot be tolerated. We would like to see swifter and more decisive action in serious cases. Participating States should not stand in the way.

All participating States should also provide the necessary support for the SMM to implement its proposed improved mandatory leave policy. Monitors who spend too long periods of time in conflict zones may become a liability both for themselves and their surroundings.

Mr Chair,

Ambassador Apakan deserves our full support in his endeavours to improve the security and safety of the SMM monitors and staff.

Thank you,

Mr Chair.