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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1017th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 September 2014

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

Mr. Chairperson,  
Ambassador Apakan,

We welcome you to the Permanent Council and congratulate you on your reappointment as head of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine. We have a positive opinion of your work and of all the Mission's monitors, who carry a good deal of responsibility on their shoulders. We have paid close attention to your detailed written report and statement today.

We agree that the Protocol by the Contact Group of 5 September is an important step in the process of peaceful settlement of the crisis in Ukraine.

At the same time, the situation with regard to a ceasefire agreement is extremely fragile. It is being observed for the most part, but there have also been several incidents in which the parties have accused each other of breaking it. This is also referred to in the SMM reports. It is important that these incidents do not get out of hand and lead to a resumption of hostilities. We note the assurances by the parties that they do not intend to disrupt the truce and shall monitor the situation closely.

There is a need now for a concerted effort to strengthen the ceasefire regime, the parameters of which are currently being elaborated. The main thing is the political will of the parties to the conflict. No less important is the verification of the ceasefire and the avoidance of new incidents.

The importance of the selfless work of the OSCE monitors involved in ensuring the impartial monitoring of the ceasefire and in assisting with the exchange of prisoners initiated by the parties cannot be overestimated.

We wholeheartedly condemn the incident on 14 September when OSCE monitors came under repeated fire from Ukrainian security forces.

We fully support the appeal to the parties by Ambassador Apakan to ensure that the OSCE monitors can work safely. We note the efforts by the Mission's leadership to reduce risks and ensure the safety of the staff, to provide them with the necessary equipment and transport and to establish contacts and to co-ordinate with both parties to the conflict.

Some of our colleagues claim that the Mission is "missing the obvious" because it is not allowed into regions controlled by the militias. Reports by monitors on the ground demonstrate that this is not true. We insist that the participating States should continue to receive reliable and verified information from the OSCE observers.

The SMM reports mention that both parties to the conflict are experiencing command and control issues. This is also effectively recognized by the Ukrainian side. The decisions to disband some of the volunteer punitive battalions and to conduct investigations of crimes committed by their military forces and others speak for themselves.

The assistance of the SMM is needed more than ever to implement the Minsk agreements, and the range of practical tasks within the Mission's mandate is becoming greater. Consequently, we support the continuation of measures to increase staffing to 500 monitors, as countenanced in its mandate. They should be backed by efforts to safeguard security and to provide equipment for the Mission's work in the field.

Russia will continue to actively support the work of the Mission. We have already presented a number of candidates for it, all qualified specialists with the necessary experience.

Beyond the priority task today of monitoring the ceasefire, the Mission should not lose sight of the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Donbas, where for several months towns and villages have been under aerial attack and massive shelling by Ukrainian security forces. Moreover, to our knowledge the shelling is still going on.

In addition, the SMM cannot ignore the state of the investigation of the crash of the Malaysia Airlines passenger plane. We urgently insist on a comprehensive, independent and transparent international investigation. Unfortunately, this investigation is being drawn out.

In accordance with its mandate, the Mission should not slacken the attention paid by it to monitoring the situation in other regions of Ukraine.

We have noted the mention in Ambassador Apakan's report of the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). We assume that the OSCE countries will be provided with full information about the modalities and the regions where they are being used and their technical characteristics. To avoid complications, this should be agreed without fail with both parties to the conflict. All information received from the UAVs should be the exclusive property of the OSCE. We expect this to be taken into account as well in connection with the proposal by our German and French colleagues to place their UAVs at the disposal of the SMM, a proposal that deserves to be studied. We look forward to receiving additional information.

I should like to recall that the geographical area of deployment and activity by the SMM is strictly defined in its mandate of 21 March 2014. It reflects the existing political and

legal situation and the fact that the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol are an integral part of the Russian Federation.

In conclusion, allow me to thank you, Ambassador Apakan, and all of your team for your selfless work. You may count on our support.

Thank you for your attention.