



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADORS APAKAN AND SAJDIK**

As delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad  
to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 11 May 2017

Mr Chair,

We join others in thanking Ambassadors Apakan and Sajdik for their reports.

We continue to fully support the SMM and ambassador Apakan. We sincerely appreciate the work they are able to carry out under very difficult and demanding circumstances.

Mr Chair,

We are gravely concerned by the situation in Eastern Ukraine. A lack of political will on all sides to implement the Minsk agreements means there is no ceasefire. Instead, there is continuous conflict of fluctuating intensity. Consequently, there is no ceasefire for the SMM to observe. This raises the question of whether the SMM should continue to count the number of ceasefire violations, or whether they should gather and analyze more relevant information.

The lack of respect for the SMM from the parties is a cause for increasing concern. It is unacceptable and must end. As must the complete lack of accountability, the “culture of impunity”, in Ambassador Apakan’s own words. We fully support a swift, thorough and impartial investigation into the tragic incident on 23 April, and anticipate its conclusions.

Regardless of what the investigations will show, one thing is already crystal clear: it is the responsibility of the parties to ensure SMM’s safety and security. The responsibility for the incident on 23 April therefore rests with those who failed to provide such safety. Mines must be cleared, mine maps must be provided, and the parties must stop all actions that endanger or hinder the SMM monitors. We understand and support that additional measures have been taken after the incident.

We condemn the security incidents that continue to threaten the SMM. This week’s incidents with threats, intimidation and sexual harassment demonstrate that the situation continues to deteriorate. Those responsible, on all levels, must be held accountable, and must radically

change their stance towards the SMM. All parties must uphold their commitments to ensure full, safe and unhindered access.

Norway has been following the security situation for the monitors closely since the mission's inception. We will continue to do what we can to support the SMM in its efforts to improve its internal security measures, both structurally and operationally. We will continue to support steps towards a better security structure, a significantly more professional security organisation, further improvements in leadership at all levels and in medical readiness. In addition, there is a need for improved and obligatory leave, as well as effective, transparent and merits based recruitment.

Even the best security measures will, be useless unless the parties start taking seriously their commitment to respect the SMM and ensure the mission's safety. We expect that all parties, including those with influence over the actors on the ground, take the necessary measures to make this happen without delay.

Thank you, Mr Chair.