



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE CURRENT SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE OSCE
AREA AND OSCE ENGAGEMENT WITH UKRAINE

As delivered by Minister Counsellor Margaret Slettevold
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 8 May 2014

Mr Chairman,

We continue to be deeply concerned by the developments in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. We are saddened by the casualties in the past few weeks. Further loss of lives must be avoided. All parties must refrain from unnecessary confrontation that could further aggravate the situation.

Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, which was recently violated by Russia in Crimea, is now further threatened by the illegal actions of armed groups in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. The main responsibility to de-escalate the situation lies with the pro-Russian separatists.

We agree with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, who on Tuesday said that armed opposition groups must stop all illegal actions, including detaining people and seizing public buildings in violation of Ukraine's laws and Constitution. These organized and well-armed groups should lay down their weapons, free arbitrarily detained persons, and vacate occupied public and administrative buildings.

Mr Chairman,

It is now imperative that all parties implement in good faith the provisions of the Geneva Joint Statement. We commend the steps taken by the Ukrainian government in this regard. Russia must desist from all actions aimed at destabilizing Ukraine and follow up on the Geneva Joint Statement with concrete action. This includes pulling back the 40.000 troops along Ukraine's eastern border and using Russia's influence over the so-called separatists to de-escalate the situation. We *have* taken note of President Putin's announcement in Moscow yesterday, after his meeting with CiO Burkhalter.

Mr Chariman,

We are concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Ukraine, including in the Russia-controlled Crimea. To deny the leader of the Crimea Tatars, Mr Mustafa Dzijemilev, access to Crimea is unacceptable and adds to our concern.

We are alarmed by the virulent anti-Ukraine propaganda in Russian government controlled media. It adds fuel to the fire. And we are worried about the long-term effects such propaganda may have on the relationship between the neighbouring countries and between ethnic and linguistic groups.

Mr Chairman,

We strongly underline the importance of the upcoming Presidential elections on 25 May. It is essential that the elections are carried out in a free and fair manner and in accordance with international standards. Successful elections are vital for Ukraine's ability to implement necessary reforms. They would also represent the best opportunity to begin the process of reconciliation and stabilization.

Finally, Mr Chairman, a word on the Special Monitoring Mission. We commend the Secretary General and his people for the way our 21 March decision is being implemented. I want to thank the Secretary General and the Director CPC for their comprehensive briefings on the SMM. These briefings are important for the decision we make on how to contribute, including with personnel and funds.

Norway is prepared to make further pledges, in light of pledges from other participating states – or group of states – and the funding gap that still may exist.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.