



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Reports on OSCE Activities in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 10, 2014

I would like to thank all of the speakers for their remarks and for providing us with information on ongoing OSCE activities in Ukraine. The OSCE has been responsive to Ukraine's request for assistance and has led the way in deploying monitoring and assessment missions to establish objective facts on the ground, including through the consensus decision of 57 participating States for the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. We thank each of you not only for your presentations today, but also for your leadership and management of these important efforts. But as we offer our thanks, let us all also give credit where real credit is due – to the people of Ukraine and its leaders -- who have shown and continue to show profound restraint in the face of growing provocations. Indeed, it is to Ukraine's great credit that its interim government has gone to such lengths to ensure an environment in which we can monitor developments on the ground there. We commend Ukraine for inviting and facilitating the ongoing activities described today.

We fully support the Special Monitoring Mission and welcome the OSCE's immediate deployments of first responders and personnel to set up this Mission for success. We applaud Acting Chief Monitor Adam Kobieracki for his efforts to deploy first responders within 24 hours of the decision's adoption, as it provided for, and for ensuring that the Mission personnel were at all ten initial deployment sites one week later.

The Special Monitoring Mission's great value is to serve as an independent, unbiased, and unpoliticized source of information about the ongoing situation in Ukraine, and to be a force for reducing tensions. The U.S. has full confidence in Ambassador Apakan to lead this diverse group of monitors from across the OSCE space in fulfilling the complete mandate of the Mission. Ambassador, we are pleased that you have been appointed to this critically important position, and we thank you in advance for your service.

I'd also like to take the occasion today – after hearing the recommendation from the acting, outgoing Chief Monitor that work begin immediately on the second tranche of 100 monitors – to state that the United States will commit \$1 million to finishing the balance on the first tranche and kicking off the fundraising round for the second tranche.

Allow me to highlight a few of the particular areas where we look forward to supporting you, Ambassador Apakan. Ambassador, it is our hope that the SMM, under your strong leadership, will share facts openly and regularly. We commend the practice established by your predecessor of daily written reports distributed to all participating States in addition to weekly summary reports to the Permanent Council through the Swiss Chairmanship. We believe that the daily reports should continue to be in-depth and substantial; there is no need

for the Monitoring Mission to open itself to charges of political motivation by exercising undue editorial judgment on which issues to include or not to include in its reports. We welcome the reports that have been issued this week that have shed light on the increasingly tense situation in eastern Ukraine. Ambassador, we encourage you and your team to conduct regular press availability events. It is important that the information your team uncovers is shared publicly. Amid the disinformation campaigns underway on a grand scale on the part of some actors, the clear and impartial voice of the OSCE Monitoring Mission must be heard publicly, not just here at the Hofburg.

Second, Ambassador, we also encourage you to very quickly assess the needs on the ground. We will support you in efforts to bring on board additional monitors, including beyond the second tranche that has been recommended by Ambassador Kobieracki. There is clear interest, as well as clear authority, in the mandate to support a 500-member monitoring mission. Ukraine is a big country. Having more monitors on the ground will allow you to observe more comprehensively, and provide the Permanent Council with vital information about the entire country.

Third, we have heard from civil society representatives about their interest in meeting with OSCE monitors to provide their insights and perspectives. Ambassador, we encourage you to ensure that civil society actors across Ukraine, at both the national and the local levels, are engaged as key interlocutors of the Special Monitoring Mission.

Fourth, the mandate also tasks the Special Monitoring Mission with facilitating dialogue on the ground in order to reduce tensions and promote normalization of the situation. We strongly encourage you to explore and support that role for the monitors.

Fifth and finally, we note that your mandate allows you to direct and deploy monitors where they are most needed – where tensions are highest and concerns about violations of OSCE commitments most grave. As events over the weekend have clearly illustrated, at present there is significantly greater need for OSCE monitors in the east and south of Ukraine than in the west. The spot reports released over the weekend on events in Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Luhansk show us how important it is to have sufficient numbers of monitors in crisis areas as events and tensions dictate. You have been given flexibility and the United States has full confidence that you will deploy your people according to those needs and will instruct them to operate throughout the country, with a focus on areas lacking clearly independent sources of information.

Though much of today has focused on the Special Monitoring Mission, I would also like to comment briefly about other OSCE monitoring and assessment efforts on the ground in Ukraine. We applaud the efforts of the High Commissioner for National Minorities Astrid Thors and Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović to travel across Ukraine, including in the Crimean region, to engage all aspects of Ukrainian society, and to assist in efforts to reduce tensions and foster adherence to OSCE commitments. We firmly support their work and respect their independence and objectivity.

It is regrettable that one participating State, apparently alarmed that the facts observed by independent institutions don't validate the parallel reality that Russia has fabricated and promoted, has chosen to launch verbal attacks. This, of course, reflects more on the insecurities of that participating State than on anything else.

We look forward to the final report of the joint ODIHR and HCNM Human Rights Assessment Mission (HRAM), especially as the HRAM team has had the opportunity to observe the situation on the ground in Crimea, and any recommendations the report may have for further action will also be of interest. Since the mandates of the SMM and all monitoring and assessment efforts also include the full territory of Ukraine, we expect other OSCE monitors will be able to enter the Crimean region as well, and provide insights into the very concerning situation there.

I would also like to briefly thank ODIHR and in particular the ODIHR election observation mission that's underway. The U.S. is pleased that ODIHR has again answered the call of Ukraine and of the international community, and is fielding the largest election observation mission ever in Ukraine. Thank you, Ambassador Lenarcic, for your leadership. We are pleased that there are already 100 Long-Term Observers on the ground, and we hope that these LTOs too will be able to access Crimea in order to do their work.

Finally, we thank Ambassador Guldemann for his report to the Permanent Council and for his service. As participating States faced challenges in arriving on a consensus agreement on the Special Monitoring Mission, it was important to have mechanisms at the ready to allow the OSCE to make initial assessments and pave the way for the SMM. With the SMM now in place, operational, and expanding further, we will look to that Monitoring Mission, the ODIHR Election Observation Mission, and the report of the HRAM and continuing visits of the Heads of OSCE Institutions to provide insights into the situation on the ground and guide development of further activities and tools to assist Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman, the OSCE's various activities in Ukraine are a vital part of the international community's efforts to provide a peaceful, diplomatic way to resolve the ongoing crisis. Ukraine is doing its part. We again urge Russia to take advantage of these efforts to de-escalate the situation, restore respect for OSCE principles, and meet its commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.