



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADORS APAKAN AND SAJDIK

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 28 January 2016

Mr Chairman

I join others in thanking Ambassadors Apakan and Sajdik for their reports. We underline our full support for the work of the SMM and the Trilateral Contact Group.

We all agree that full implementation of the Minsk agreements is the way forward. Norway is therefore concerned by the continued lack of respect for these agreements. Ceasefire violations, renewed use of heavy weapons along the line of contact, and the many security incidents involving SMM monitors are unacceptable. Most cases of threats and intimidation have taken place in areas controlled by separatists.

Recent incidents confirm that the safety of SMM monitors must be our first priority. I support speakers before me that have asked Ambassador Apakan to elaborate on efforts to ensure personnel safety as the mission expands.

Restrictions on the freedom of movement of the SMM take place on a daily basis, in blatant disregard of Minsk commitments. According to Ambassador Apakan's report "the overwhelming majority of such restrictions are encountered in areas not controlled by the Government". All parties must live up to their commitments to ensure the SMM's freedom of movement.

Russia must use its influence over the separatists to ensure their full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Mr Chairman,

We continue to be gravely concerned by the humanitarian situation. Restrictions on humanitarian actors imposed by the separatists must end immediately. Difficulties in crossing the contact line and obtaining essential goods also pose considerable challenges for civilians in separatist controlled areas.

We commend the SMM's important facilitation of humanitarian access, local ceasefires and humanitarian demining. We welcome the mission's close cooperation and information sharing with humanitarian actors.

We highly value the SMM's reporting. The mission is an essential source of information from the conflict zone. We also appreciate the high quality thematic reports. The report on JCCC did not make us more optimistic on its potential role. We also note that the so-called "DPR" has forced Ukrainian JCCC representatives out of areas under their control.

Mr Chairman,

We support the SMM's focus on follow-up of the Minsk agreements. Ceasefire monitoring and verification of withdrawal of weapons are key tasks. However, the Human Dimension should not be forgotten. Follow-up of human rights issues and the humanitarian situation is a central part of the mission's mandate. We would therefore like to see a strong focus on such issues, especially in the conflict zone. This should also be seen in connection with outreach activities. Increased contact with civilians about their daily challenges could boost the mission's acceptance. In this connection, we welcome SMM's Intensified Outreach Plan, and the intended establishment of "Public Reception Centres" in eastern teams and hubs, and would appreciate a status update on this work.

In addition to thematic reports, we would appreciate more regular reporting on human dimension issues in Ukraine, perhaps through periodic human dimension digests.

Mr Chairman,

Almost a year has passed since the adoption of the Minsk Package of Measures and the establishment of the working groups under the Trilateral Contact Group. We underline our full support for the important work of Ambassador Sajdik and the TCG. We nevertheless regret limited progress in the working groups, and urge parties to engage in honest and constructive dialogue.

Mr Chairman,

We are looking forward to agreeing on a timely extension of the mandate along with an adequate budget for the SMM. The mission is a cornerstone activity for the OSCE. All 57 participating States share an equal responsibility for the mission, and it must therefore be financed mainly through assessed contributions.

We will continue to support the SMM by nominating qualified personnel. There are currently 13 Norwegian secondees in the mission.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.