

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference

Special Session: Ensuring security and stability in the OSCE region in light of developments with respect to Ukraine

Statement by Poland as delivered by ambassador Adam Bugajski, Permanent Representative of Poland to the OSCE
Vienna, 23 June 2015

Thank you Mr. Secretary General,

Poland fully subscribes to the EU statement delivered earlier. In addition, I would like to make a few points in my national capacity.

An independent, sovereign, and stable Ukraine, within its internationally recognised borders, is key to security in Europe and in the whole OSCE area. We join others in calling on Russia to prove in practice its commitment to observe the basic principles of interstate relations. Only through upholding full respect for shared values and commitments by all participating States, we will be able to address collectively challenges and threats to security in the OSCE region.

I will focus on four aspects.

First: the situation on the ground. The SMM alarms about its deterioration. We witness a dangerous regress in the implementation of the first three paragraphs of the Package of Measures adopted in February in a number of locations in eastern Ukraine. The Russia-backed separatists are primarily behind these ceasefire violations, the recent attack on Marinka with the use of heavy weapons is just one example. We can but only repeat the appeal: the fighting must end and the foreign troops must be withdrawn from Donbas, if any efforts to facilitate a peaceful political resolution to the conflict are to be viable.

Against this background, the safety and security of the SMM monitors is of highest importance. The incidents with their involvement and threats against them must stop. We call on all sides to ensure their security and to allow them to carry out their mandate without any obstacles, including in the border area.

Second: the political process. We must exert further pressure in order to ensure implementation of the Minsk agreements. The Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE needs to remain an important tool. The launching of the working groups under the supervision of the TCG has been an essential step. We also count on progress to be achieved by the Normandy Group in facilitating the Minsk agreements implementation.

The political track is extremely important, however, it should be concentrated on substance rather than on process. And it cannot be detached from the developments on the ground, but should change them for the better.

Third: the role of the OSCE. Poland commends the OSCE for its swift and decisive response to the conflict. We strongly support the SMM and praise its personnel for their dedicated work in Ukraine often in an extremely difficult environment. We have offered the SMM our financial and human resources, including 29 Polish monitors so far.

We support further strengthening of monitoring and verification capacities of the SMM. If required, the mission should be further expanded. However, its impact depends primarily on the ability to freely carry out its mandate, not on the sheer number of monitors.

Fourth: the manipulation of information. We are concerned about the unabating propaganda in Russian state-controlled media outlets covering the conflict. It has been present from the very beginning, used as a part of a new hybrid approach to modern warfare, inciting insecurity, tensions and event hatred. The last week's "Conference on Journalists' Safety, Media Freedom and Pluralism in Times of Conflict" underlined that aggression in the media can start and fuel conflict on the ground.

Mr. Secretary General,

The crisis in and around Ukraine has detrimental security implications for the whole Europe and beyond. The aggression of one participating State against another one is a flagrant violation of the OSCE commitments and international law. The illegitimate use of military force and illegal annexation of Crimea coupled with disrespect for human life and human rights, have undermined the basic tenets of European security and the idea of a security community.

We need to be vigilant about further developments in the ongoing conflict. All depends on the seriousness of all parties and in particular on Russia's readiness to respect sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine and its willingness to take decisive actions aimed at stopping the bloodshed in Donbas. These actions are in practice simple, but require political courage and right decisions.

I thank you.