



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY
ON RUSSIA'S ILLEGAL ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA AND SEVASTOPOL**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 19 March 2015

Mr Chairman,

One year after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol nobody has recognized it. Nobody should. Norway will not. We stand firm in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr Chairman,

The crisis in and around Ukraine, and in particular its wider consequences, was an important theme in Foreign Minister Brende's Foreign Policy Report to the Storting – Norway's parliament – two weeks ago.

The Foreign Minister pointed out that Russia's violations of international law and destabilisation of Ukraine are spreading uncertainty throughout Europe and that the Russian Federation is challenging the very basis of the international legal order.

Russia has not only tried to change Ukraine's borders, Foreign Minister Brende continued, it is also preventing the country from shaping its own future. Ultimately, this is a question of Ukraine's right to chart its own course for the future.

That is why the conflict is not just about Ukraine, but also about Russia's lack of respect for other states and for international rules, the Foreign Minister concluded.

On Norway's own reaction to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Foreign Minister Brende said that ever since the crisis in Ukraine began, Norway has stood together with the EU, the US and other likeminded countries in reacting to Russia's violations of international law. We have no

choice but to react when fundamental principles of international law are violated, the Foreign Minister underlined. The restrictive measures against Russia are a necessary response to Russia's violation of fundamental international rules.

Mr Chairman,

Foreign Minister Brende also pointed out that one important way of responding to Russia's aggression is to help Ukraine to succeed in its goals. During her visit to Kyiv in November 2014, Prime Minister Solberg launched a comprehensive support package from Norway to important sectors of the Ukrainian society.

We are now working out the details of this support package.

Mr Chairman,

By way of concluding I would like to echo colleagues in expressing our deep concern at the continuous military build-up and deterioration of the human rights situation in the Crimean peninsula, including the denial of free speech and the persecution of persons belonging to minorities. We reiterate our call to provide international human rights actors and OSCE institutions with full, free and unrestricted access to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol.

Thank you.