



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE UPDATES BY SMM CHIEF
MONITOR AMBASSADOR APAKAN AND CiO SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE AMBASSADOR TAGLIAVINI**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 26 March 2015

Mr Chairman,

I join speakers before me in thanking Ambassadors Apakan and Tagliavini for their updates. I agree with those who have argued that the updates confirm that we are in a critical phase of the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Mr Chairman,

None of us could have predicted the developments we have witnessed in Eastern Ukraine since we established the SMM one year ago. Separatists backed by Russia have turned parts of Donbass into a war zone. At the same time, the SMM's tasks and responsibilities have gradually been expanded, with the Minsk agreements from September 2014 and the Package of Measures for the Implementation of them agreed last month.

Ambassador Apakan and his team have demonstrated impressive flexibility and adaptability in facing mounting challenges on the ground and increasing demands from the participating States. We express our deep appreciation for the job the SMM is doing.

We especially appreciate the importance attached to safety and security of the monitors. Recent threats against the monitors demonstrate that this must remain a top priority.

Mr Chairman,

The growing role of the SMM not only puts greater demands on the mission itself. It also requires greater support from participating States. We will maintain our firm political and practical support. We will continue nominating qualified candidates to the SMM.

Mr Chairman,

We commend Ambassador Tagliavini for her leadership of the Trilateral Contact Group. In a variety of fora on different levels and in different locations, Ambassador Tagliavini has brokered important agreements between Ukraine, Russia, and the Russia-backed separatists.

Mr Chairman,

The ceasefire continues to be violated. While we welcome the reduced use of heavy weapons, we are concerned by SMM reports indicating an escalation in certain parts of the ceasefire zone through the use of lighter weapons. We call on all signatories of the Minsk agreements, including Russia, to implement them in full, starting with an immediate and complete cessation of hostilities.

All signatories, again including Russia, must immediately provide the SMM with the necessary access, security guarantees and baseline information. Without it, credible verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons is not possible.

Reported restrictions on the SMM's freedom of movement are unacceptable. We note from SMM reports that the majority of restrictions are imposed in separatist controlled areas.

In addition to complying with its own obligations, Russia must use its influence over the separatists it backs and make them comply with the Minsk agreements.

Mr Chairman,

Ukraine is facing multiple challenges. We commend the Ukrainian leadership for their reform efforts. Without strong support from the international community it will be difficult for them to succeed. The OSCE has an important role to play, through the SMM, the trilateral contact group, the Project Coordinator and the Institutions.

Mr Chairman,

Norway will continue its strong support to Ukraine, through the OSCE, the Council and Europe as well as bilaterally. An important vehicle for our support is the cooperation package launched during Prime Minister Solberg's visit to Ukraine last November. The implementation of this package is an important topic for discussions during the visit of First Deputy Foreign Minister Nataliia Galibarenko to Oslo this week.

Mr Chairman,

To help Ukraine to succeed in its reform goals is an important way of responding to Russia's aggression against it.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.