



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO CIO SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AMBASSADOR MARTIN SAJDIK

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 28 September 2015

Mr Chairman,

We join others in welcoming ambassador Sajdik to the Permanent Council. His first report to the Permanent Council comes at a time when the situation in Ukraine again is at a critical juncture.

The decrease in hostilities in Eastern Ukraine must be used to create impetus for negotiations in the Trilateral Contact Group and its subordinate working groups. Full implementation of the Minsk agreements must be ensured.

The upcoming elections are a key opportunity for the Minsk signatories to demonstrate their resolve to implement the agreements. We call on the parties to swiftly agree on election modalities in the political working group under the Trilateral Contact Group.

Elections must be carried out in accordance with Ukrainian law and OSCE standards, and must be observed by ODIHR. The so-called “elections” announced by the Russia-backed separatists in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk would endanger the Minsk process and must be called off. We call on Russia to ensure that this happens by publicly denouncing the planned “elections”.

Mr Chairman,

The lull in hostilities must also be used to achieve agreement on withdrawal of weapons, including an effective verification regime.

In order for the SMM to effectively observe the ceasefire and verify weapons withdrawal, all parties must immediately grant monitors full and unfettered freedom of movement. Access is especially restricted in separatist controlled areas and along the separatist controlled part of the state border with Russia.

Mr Chairman,

We are deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in separatist controlled areas. Despite the approaching winter, all UN agencies and several international NGOs have been forced out of “LPR”-controlled territory, and all UN operations have been suspended by “DPR”.

UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien expressed his alarm over the situation in a statement last week. He underlined that the failure of the de facto authorities to allow unimpeded humanitarian access constitutes a blatant violation of International Humanitarian Law. We echo the Under-Secretary-General's call on the responsible parties to ensure the immediate resumption of UN and international NGO activities. We call on Russia to use its influence to end the interference in the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

Finally, Mr Chairman, I wish Ambassador Sajdik every success in his difficult task of facilitating talks between Ukraine and Russia in the Trilateral Contact Group.

Thank you, Mr Chairman