



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO THE BRIEFINGS GIVEN BY
AMBASSADORS SAJDIK AND ÇEVİK

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 5 September 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Let me join others in thanking Ambassadors Çevik and Sajdik for their reports to the Permanent Council, and to assure them of Norway's continued and full support.

During this reporting period, we are pleased to note positive developments. The 21 July recommitment to the ceasefire agreement led to a longer period of significant reduction of ceasefire violations than have been the case during earlier recommitments. In Stanytsia Luhanska assistance has been given to civilians crossing the contact line and demining and preparations for bridge repairs have begun. We also hear that the discussions in the TCG are more constructive than before. This is good, though overdue.

However, the number of ceasefire violations are still unacceptable. The SMM still observe new mines. There is too little clearing of mines and unexploded ordnance. Weapons and other military equipment continue to be placed near civilians or civilian objects, including schools. Thus, the civilian population still lives with fear and uncertainty and new injuries and fatalities are the result. We urge the parties to start fulfilling the commitments from the Minsk agreements and create necessary conditions for improving the humanitarian situation.

The SMM continue to fulfil its mandate under difficult circumstances. We call on all parties to the conflict to respect that the SMM's mandate covers Ukraine's territory in its entirety, including the Crimean peninsula. The SMM's monitors continue to experience threats, intimidation, and restrictions on their freedom of movement, predominantly in non-government controlled areas. We urge all parties to put an end to such practices and to ensure the safety of the SMM monitors and their monitoring equipment.

We take note the report's paragraph on gender equality and UNSCR 1325. As a gender perspective is to be integrated in all of the SMM's activities we would however like to see more on this throughout the report. With regard to the gender situation in the SMM, we would also appreciate to hear more on the content of the second progress report of the Mission-specific Gender Equality Action Plan.

We thank ambassadors Sajdik and Çevik for the important work they and their teams are doing under demanding circumstances. We highly appreciate the SMM's reporting and its efforts to reduce tensions on the ground.

More than five years have passed since Russia violated international law by occupying Crimea and destabilising Eastern Ukraine. Norway reiterates its support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the Crimean Peninsula and the adjoining

territorial waters. Norway urges Russia to comply with the order of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea of 25 May, and release the sailors and vessels seized close to the Kerch Strait on 25 November last year.