



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

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

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henning Hjortland Johansen at the Permanent  
Council  
Vienna, 12 December 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madame Chair,

We join others in welcoming Ambassador Sajdik and Çevik back to the Permanent Council. Today, we especially thank Ambassador Sajdik for his dedicated work as the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office since 2015. Under his leadership, the Trilateral Contact Group and the Working Groups have achieved concrete progress, not least in matters of importance to the civilian population in the conflict-affected areas. We would also like to welcome Ambassador Heidi Grau as his successor and wish her success in her new position.

The TCG and Working Groups have been instrumental in preparing for the recent summit in the Normandy format. We welcome the renewed commitments from the meeting and hope this summit will inspire further progress towards resolving the conflict.

Although many matters remain to be resolved, we welcome the positive outcomes from the summit. The agreed exchange of detainees is an encouraging step. Plans for mine clearance should be urgently finalised and implemented, and laying of new mines must be stopped.

We are pleased to note the positive developments in the three disengagement areas, and we encourage the parties to continue disengagement in further areas. The repair of the bridge at Stanytsia Luhanska has made crossing the contact line easier and safer. Thousands of civilians, including older people, cross the contact line every day.

Providing additional crossing points, as agreed in the summit in Paris, will further ease life for civilians living in the affected areas.

The humanitarian situation for civilians living near the contact line is difficult on both sides. As winter approaches, more people will need humanitarian assistance, including food and heating. All parties have an obligation to provide aid and facilitate the efforts of international aid organisations.

The SMM's role will be vital in monitoring the implementation of agreed steps on the ground. We see that our monitors continue to experience restrictions on their freedom of movement and that more than 90 percent of these restrictions occur in non-government controlled areas. This is unacceptable, and we call upon Russia to use its influence over the armed formations to remove these restrictions.

The SMM continues to be of crucial importance in observing the situation and is the primary source of information from the conflict area. We appreciate the section on gender equality and UNSCR 1325 in the Chief Monitor's report. However, we wish to see the gender perspective more broadly reflected in the report.

We highly appreciate the work done by the ambassadors and their teams. Norway will continue to support their work.

Norway reiterates its support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including the Crimean Peninsula and the adjoining territorial waters.

Thank you