



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

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

Delivered by Amb. Anne-Kirsti Karlsen  
at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 8 October 2020

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

I would like to start by thanking Ambassadors Çevik and Grau for their reports, and also for the important work they and their teams continue to carry out.

The sharp reduction in the number of ceasefire violations observed by the SMM since the renewed ceasefire agreement entered into force on 27 July is truly an encouraging development. This is a clear demonstration of the value of the negotiations in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), and Norway commends the efforts of the negotiators.

In addition to improving the security situation, the reduction in ceasefire violations significantly alleviates the situation for the civilian population, with fewer casualties and less damage to civilian property and infrastructure. However, on both sides of the contact line the SMM has observed violations of the measures agreed on in the TCG.

Norway calls on all parties to uphold the ceasefire, and to act constructively with a view to resolving the conflict.

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

COVID-19 continues to place additional burdens on the civilian population. The restrictions imposed on crossing the contact line – in both directions – create significant problems. We urge all parties to simplify the administrative and practical procedures required, and to coordinate action needed to reopen crossing routes. Furthermore, two additional crossing points should be opened, in line with the conclusions of the Normandy Summit in December 2019.

The SMM has adopted a number of stringent precautionary measures to protect its members and the population from COVID-19. Nevertheless, the Mission continues to face restrictions on its freedom of movement. It is still unable to operate seamlessly across the contact line and between non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This reduces the SMM's operational capability and its ability to replenish its capabilities in non-government-controlled areas.

The imposition of restrictions on the SMM's freedom of movement runs contrary to the mandate agreed upon by the Permanent Council, as well as to the commitments undertaken in the Minsk agreements. We call on the parties to fulfil their commitments, and we urge the Russian Federation to use its considerable influence on the armed formations it backs to ensure that the SMM's freedom of movement is respected.

With the SMM's capacity reduced, it is particularly worrying that its technical assets continue to be targeted, thereby further reducing capacity. The parties must put an end to the deliberate destruction of SMM equipment such as cameras and UAVs.

The SMM's freedom of movement continues to be limited by mines and UXO, which also pose a grave risk to civilians. It is worrying that the SMM continues to observe such devices, often for the first time, on both sides of the contact line. Once again, we call upon all parties to refrain from laying mines and to contribute to mine clearance, recalling obligations under the Mine Ban Convention and other relevant instruments.

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

Thank you.