



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on OSCE Engagement with Ukraine**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 22, 2014

Today, we are grateful for this Organization and applaud its efforts to support the people of Ukraine and assist a country in transition as it seeks to enhance security, stability, democracy, and prosperity. The OSCE has served as a forum for dialogue and a platform for action. We have together deployed a Special Monitoring Mission—which is now providing daily reports, establishing facts, and monitoring respect for OSCE commitments. The OSCE has launched extra-budgetary assistance projects, and deployed senior OSCE officials to Ukraine. Many in the international community are looking to the OSCE to continue action in support of securing a stronger future for Ukraine.

The United States welcomes the results of last week's Geneva discussions in which Foreign Ministers Kerry, Deshchytzia, and Lavrov, and EU High Representative Ashton issued a Joint Diplomatic Statement on initial concrete steps to de-escalate tensions and restore security for all citizens. Ukraine, along with Russia, the US, and the EU, has politically committed to actively support initial steps toward de-escalation. These steps need to be carried out immediately, as High Representative Ashton underscored in Geneva on Thursday afternoon. This is not a long-term project. It is a short-term plan that must be fulfilled immediately.

On a practical level, the Geneva Statement asks the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to assist Ukrainian authorities and local communities in implementing de-escalation measures. Indeed, the Mission's mandate tasks it, among other things, to reduce tensions and foster peace, stability, and security. The Geneva Statement calls for that part of the mandate to be used so that OSCE monitors can actively facilitate dialogue and foster resolution as illegal armed groups disarm, illegally seized buildings are returned to their legitimate users, and illegally occupied places are vacated.

We applaud the measures taken by the Government of Ukraine to implement the Geneva Joint Statement, including the draft law on amnesty; standing up a weapons buy-back program; a public commitment to "spare no effort" to engage in urgent, direct discussions about Ukraine's constitutional reform with representatives of Ukraine's regions; and engaging pro-Russian groups and others illegally occupying government buildings in the east. And we heard of several other steps from our Ukrainian colleague today.

Unfortunately, we've yet to see Russia take the action that Russia needs to take to demonstrate its commitment to stabilizing the east. Again – time is of the essence! We reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to take active and concrete steps immediately to de-escalate the crisis, including by issuing public and private messages to pro-Russian elements engaged in illegal activities in Ukraine. We are particularly concerned by the recent

steps taken by these separatist groups that have exacerbated tensions: hostage taking, including journalists and local government officials, seizure of additional buildings, establishing new barricades, seizure of local radio and television stations, firing upon a helicopter on April 19, which had been dropping leaflets explaining the Geneva agreement over Slovyansk, a willful and vocal disregard for the Joint Statement's provisions, and other actions. We call on Russia to demonstrate that it meant what it said last Thursday in Geneva and make clear to the separatists in Eastern Ukraine that they do not have Moscow's support. So far, the SMM has reported that the separatists say they have received no messages from Russia indicating they should disarm and relinquish control of government buildings or public spaces. We urge Russia to publicly call for implementation of the Geneva Joint Statement and to support the work of the SMM, including by dispatching senior Russian officials with SMM teams to persuade pro-Russian or separatist groups to abide by the terms of the Joint Statement, in particular by vacating illegally occupied streets, squares, and other public places and returning illegally seized buildings to their legitimate owners.

In addition to the critical steps identified in Geneva, we reiterate our call for de-escalation of the situation through military steps, including the return of Russian forces deployed along the border with Ukraine to their pre-crisis locations and numbers. Too much time has been lost.

As Vice President Biden reiterated today in Kyiv, the illegal occupation of Crimea remains an illegitimate act that we will not recognize. It runs counter to every norm of acceptable 21<sup>st</sup> century behavior and makes Russia's continued massing of tens of thousands of troops even more menacing and unusual. We again regret that the Russian Federation did not participate in the joint Forum for Security Cooperation / Permanent Council meeting last week.

The United States pledges to fully support both the mandate and operations of the Special Monitoring Mission. Monitors should have the necessary tools, supplies, training, and personnel to carry out their objectives. They should also be granted unhindered and unfettered access throughout all of Ukraine. Their safety is of grave importance and it requires the engagement of every participating State to ensure that the Mission is fully resourced to realize all of its objectives.

We also remain grateful for the work of the OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, and ODIHR, and commend the government of Ukraine for its productive and constructive engagement with the independent institutions.

Mr. Chairperson, the United States applauds the work done by many participating States and the resources they have contributed to enable this Organization to achieve success in Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.