



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN AND AROUND UKRAINE

As delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad  
to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 8 September 2016

Mr Chair,

I aligned myself with the statement made on behalf of the EU. Allow me to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity, as the situation in and around Ukraine remains a matter of great importance and concern to my government.

Firstly, I would like to welcome the renewed ceasefire that came into effect as of 1 September. The scale of fighting this summer has caused increased political tension and human suffering. Bringing the fire to a halt was an important step. However, the fact that we are now reliving the events of last year and retracing our diplomatic steps is also reason for grave concern. If the conflict is to be resolved, a new impetus is needed in the form of serious political will. I hope this is what the Russian President signalled when he agreed to resume the Normandy format talks.

Secondly, while noting the news of Ilmi Umerov's release yesterday, I would like to express our deep concern for his treatment. The forced psychiatric confinement of Mr. Umerov by the de facto authorities in Crimea, is a clear human rights violation and another reminder of the serious human rights situation in Crimea. It is also yet another reminder of how the population in Crimea has been cut off from effective international human rights monitoring, including by the OSCE, since the illegal Russian annexation in March 2014. The fact that this situation can exist in Europe in 2016 is deplorable.

Thirdly, I would like to raise the incident of the unacceptable arson attack against the TV station “Inter”, which took place in Ukraine last weekend. In light of this and other recent events, we echo the call from the Representative on the Freedom of the Media to ensure the safety of journalists in Ukraine. We welcome the swift condemnation of the attack from president Poroshenko and call upon Ukrainian authorities to conduct a transparent and thorough investigation into such events and to hold those responsible to account.

Thank you Mr Chair