



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Chairperson in Office's Notification on Instructions to Effect Closure of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 28, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We appreciate your update on the status of the SMM and have full confidence in the SG to carry out an efficient closure. Like my colleagues from the EU and from the U.K., the United States continues to regret that the Russian Federation blocked consensus on the mandate of the special monitoring mission to Ukraine and find this decision irresponsible and unjustifiable.

Mr. Chair, in the years following Russia's occupation of Crimea and instigation of the conflict in eastern parts of Ukraine, as everyone in this room is aware, the SMM contributed to reducing tensions by monitoring and supporting the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments. Through courage, ingenuity and grit, SSM monitors and affiliated personnel have provided impartial, fact-based reporting, which brought much needed transparency to the situation on the ground, something I think we all agree is useful and necessary now just as much as it was in the past. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the SMM personnel for their selfless service over the past eight years. They have earned our utmost respect for what they have done every day to promote stability and security in the region.

I also wish to echo my colleagues in condemning all allegations of espionage against the national staff of the Special Monitoring Mission who are doing exactly what we in this room asked them to do day in and day out. They deserve our respect and they deserve our support.

Dear colleagues, when this carnage ends, we are going to have to help Ukraine pick up the pieces and rebuild. Ukrainians are fighting not just for their own freedom, but for a free world on behalf of all of us and I believe we're going to be looking to put something back into place that looks a lot like the SMM. And so I call upon all of us to do what is necessary when that time comes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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