



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY
(1000th Meeting of the Permanent Council, 15 May 2014)**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan back to the Permanent Council. I thank him for his comprehensive and insightful oral and written reports, which are a testimony to the depth and intensity of the developments which took place in Ukraine during the relatively short time since Ambassador Apakan was with us last.

On the occasion of the presentation of the first report by the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM), I will re-iterate Turkey's stance that the crisis in Ukraine needs to be settled through a negotiated political solution based on Ukraine's political unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The alarming situation in Ukraine unfortunately persists. We are deeply concerned by the impact of the so-called referenda organized last Sunday. We are worried with the continued presence of armed groups occupying public buildings and building roadblocks, hindering and sometimes even detaining SMM members—as was the case in Luhansk last weekend.

Mr. Chairperson,

We lost much time and energy in this hall especially during our initial discussions on Ukraine, chiefly because our positions and evaluations were based on data that were at remarkable variance. We established the SMM to, inter alia, help us act upon the same data. It would be only fair to say that the SMM has done a remarkable job so far in this field, as well as numerous others.

First and foremost, the SMM has proven itself as a reliable and credible partner and interlocutor. All actors converge on this fact. It provides us with objective, reliable and current data on a daily basis. It also provides us with spot reports where circumstances warrant it. It also furnishes periodic reports that help us get a better understanding of the general evolution of the situation. It gathers this wealth of information with a critically spread presence in areas of tension. They are in contact with persons from all groups in the field. In other words, the SMM was established to be the OSCE's nervous system in Ukraine. It has proved to be a very sensitive and sensible one indeed.

The SMM has also been in constant coordination and cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities and other stakeholders. They held meetings on a daily basis in Kyiv. While the Mission's assets are out in the field in sometimes very risky missions, being on the same page

with all concerned is extremely important also to ensure the safety of SMM's assets. This has also been done in an exemplary manner.

Like previous speakers, I would not fail to touch upon briefly that The SMM also played a critical role in securing the release of the military inspectors who were abducted while performing their mission under the Vienna Document and we express our deep appreciation for that

It is gratifying to see that it successfully met all the ever-evolving challenges it encountered in numerous areas ranging from security to providing counsel to stakeholders on specific issues. All this has been achieved in an environment fraught not only with security-related difficulties but also where the SMM sought to enlarge itself in terms of both resources and capacity.

Mr. Chairperson,

The holding of free and fair elections on 25th May will not only be part of the democratic process in Ukraine, but will also contribute to efforts in overcoming the ongoing crisis and restoring stability in the country. It will pave the way for the continuation of an inclusive Constitutional process with an open national dialogue on solid bases. In that context, we welcome yesterday's launch of Round Table discussions which would be with the ownership of Ukraine and hopefully would contribute to de-escalating and stabilizing the situation. In line with the tasks emanating from both the PC Decision No. 1117 and the Geneva Joint Statement, we expect the SMM to make its supportive contribution to the Ukrainian-led and owned process.

Mr. Chairperson,

We must bear in mind that the SMM has proved to be a key factor in bringing the OSCE back in the international spotlight. In other words, what the SMM delivers is useful not only on the ground, but also back here in Vienna and even a broader audience. We, therefore, have another very important reason to make sure that the SMM maintains its current degree of delivery.

To this end, we need to provide the SMM with sustained support in terms of both personnel and financial resources. We will have to depend on the guidance of the SMM leadership on the priority areas that need to be addressed within this context.

In conclusion, I wish to commend Ambassador Apakan, the leadership and all able staff of the SMM. They represent the OSCE at its finest. I pledge to them Turkey's unwavering support and wish them well-deserved success in all their endeavors.

Thank you.