



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE END OF SERVICE OF THE CHIEF MONITOR,  
AMBASSADOR ERTUGRUL APAKAN

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad  
at the Permanent Council Vienna, 30 May 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,  
Ambassador Apakan,

In 2014, you accepted a monumental task: to lead the international community's monitoring of the conflict in and around Ukraine, with the aim of reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability and security. Over the last five years, you have worked tirelessly, selflessly, and with great understanding and compassion towards this end.

From its beginning as a hastily put together mission of one hundred monitors, the Special Monitoring Mission has grown to be the OSCE's largest operation. Almost sixty percent of the OSCE's international staff work for you. That is no small responsibility, and one that you have handled to the best of anyone's ability.

You have recognised the value of gender mainstreaming in the SMM, as well as of the women, peace and security agenda, and their contribution to achieving the mission objectives. Your personal engagement has mattered much in an organisation where there is still little understanding of the value of gender mainstreaming. While we will miss your engagement, we trust that your team, as well as your successor, will follow your example and give gender aspects the attention they deserve.

You have proved yourself a leader of both men and women. We know that you have been devoted to your staff. We know that you have been there for them when it has mattered, that you have supported them in difficult circumstances, from the ordinary, through the extraordinary, to the extreme. They have enjoyed your respect and consideration as Chief Monitor; they report that you truly care. Today, as your service to the OSCE ends, we know that they will miss you; so will we.

Thank you.