

UKRAINE: OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine patrol member killed in explosion near Luhansk

OSCE (23.04.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2q5mDV2> – A paramedic who was part of a patrol of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) died and two SMM monitors were taken to hospital today after their vehicle was heavily damaged by an explosion near Pryshyb in the non-government controlled Luhansk region.

Austrian Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Sebastian Kurz and OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier both extend their most heartfelt condolences to the family and relatives of the individual who died as well as to the SMM team as a whole. They also express solidarity with the monitors who were injured and wish them a speedy recovery.

“Immediately after the incident became known, I spoke with SMM Chief Monitor Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan to assure him of the full support of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship in these hard times. SMM is doing an outstanding job, day by day, to stabilize the crisis in and around Ukraine. But the mission is too often hampered by threats, by access restrictions, by disinformation or the destruction of its technical means. This is simply unacceptable. All circumstances of this tragic incident must be clarified without hindrance. I urge all actors that have an influence on the situation on the ground to live up to their responsibility in guaranteeing safety and security to the SMM,” Kurz said.

Zannier said: “I am deeply shocked and saddened by this tragic death. This is the first time a member of an SMM patrol has been killed while on duty. This appalling incident underlines

the increasingly dangerous security environment the SMM monitors are working in every day. All sides are responsible for the safety and security of the OSCE monitors. The Mission must have universal support and everyone must recommit to its objectives and to protecting the monitors from danger. The OSCE has launched an investigation into the incident and expects maximum co-operation from all concerned.”

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