



Today's decision by the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna to extend the mandate of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) and allocate necessary resources confirms the support and commitment of all 57 participating States to implementing the Minsk agreements and to the Mission, said OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Serbia's Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić.

"We must seize the momentum if we are to reach the goal which I am certain we all share, to see the end of hostilities, verify the withdrawal of heavy weapons, and boost national dialogue that leads to a normalised situation and better life for all those affected by the conflict," he said.

"It is crucial for all parties to ensure unfettered access to our monitors and to guarantee their security, which is the prerequisite for the SMM to implement its mandate on the ground," he added.

The decision extends the mandate of the Special Monitoring Mission until 31 March 2016. It further allows for the number of SMM monitors to be increased from the currently approved level of 500 up to 1,000, as necessary, according to the situation and the needs on the ground.

Minister Dačić thanked OSCE participating States for the co-operation they extended to Serbia's Chairmanship in the process of reaching the decision on the Mission to Ukraine.

*Photo by: OSCE/Evgeniy Maloletka*