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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1082nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 December 2015

**In response to the report by Mr. Simon Eugster, OSCE Chief Observer at
the Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome Mr. Simon Eugster, the new OSCE Chief Observer at the two Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk, to this Permanent Council meeting. We appreciate the work of the Observer Mission, which was deployed at the invitation of the Russian Federation as a goodwill gesture in the wake of the Berlin Declaration of the Normandy quartet foreign ministers of 2 July 2014.

We ensure comfortable and safe working conditions for the OSCE observers on the basis of the Russian Government Order of 15 October 2014. In view of the OSCE's lack of international legal personality, immunities and privileges can be granted to Observer Mission staff only on a bilateral basis through their accreditation at the embassies of the respective countries in Russia.

We note the Observer Mission's factual operational reports. They set out the real state of affairs on the border and, contrary to the speculations frequently heard in this room, confirm that there are no movements of troops or weapons across the border.

As for humanitarian assistance to the population of Donbas, unlike the authorities in Kyiv, who have imposed a blockade on their own citizens, Russia cannot remain indifferent to the humanitarian disaster in south-eastern Ukraine. We regularly send convoys of humanitarian aid to the civilian population of Donbas in accordance with international humanitarian law. We are operating in an open and transparent manner. We notify Ukraine in advance of the cargo. We send the humanitarian convoys through the Russian checkpoints where Ukrainian customs officers and border guards are deployed in accordance with a bilateral agreement. The OSCE observers report that Ukrainian customs officers and border guards at the Donetsk checkpoint regularly inspect Russian humanitarian convoys.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the light of today's well-known arguments about the need to extend OSCE monitoring to the entire length of the Russian-Ukrainian border, we recall that Russia has no such obligations. The Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014 does not mention the deployment of OSCE observers on the Russian side of the border with Ukraine. Nor is there any reference to this in the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements adopted on 12 February 2015 and subsequently endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202. The assertions we have heard today are yet another unscrupulous attempt to twist the existing agreements.

As for the claims by the Permanent Representative of Ukraine that "thousands of people in military-style clothing" are moving into Ukraine through the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints, they do not reflect the real state of affairs. The Observer Mission's reports speak of people in "camouflage clothes", which is a very widespread form of dress in both countries. People wearing such clothing are mainly travelling to Russia and not Ukraine, and not thousands but 100 to 150 people per week.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our support for the work of the OSCE Observer Mission at the two Russian checkpoints. We wish Mr. Eugster and his colleagues every success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.