



United States Mission to the OSCE

On Russia's Continued Objection to Renewal of the OSCE's Border Observation Mission Mandate

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 16, 2021

The United States joins others at this table in expressing our deep regret at the Russian Federation's announced decision to block consensus on the extension of the OSCE Border Observer Mission's mandate and financing arrangement at the end of September, despite a clear belief on the part of participating States that the BOM plays a valuable – indeed unique – role as a confidence building measure and source of transparency. As indicated in statements at the Permanent Council both today and on previous occasions, participating States strongly believe the Mission has effectively and professionally carried out its agreed mandate.

Why does Russia continue to restrict observation of the Russia-Ukraine border? Why does Russia object to renewing the mandate of the Border Observer Mission, despite its previous consent to permit the BOM to operate? I remind this Permanent Council that Russia considered the BOM a good idea at the time of its creation, welcomed the monitors, and even complimented the BOM's work at the most recent PC meeting. Why, then, does Russia feel the need to end the BOM's important work, if for no reason other than to conceal its direct and destructive hand in the conflict in eastern Ukraine?

Again, I remind this Permanent Council that Russia signed the Minsk Protocols in 2014, which guarantee "permanent monitoring on the Ukrainian Russian state border and verification by the OSCE." While the BOM predates the Minsk Agreements, Russia's objection to renewing the mandate is contrary to the spirit of the Minsk Agreements. Russia's latest obstruction looks to be just the latest in a long line of broken promises and the most recent demonstration that maintaining positive relations with its neighbors is simply not a priority for Russia.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

###