

OSCE BORDER OBSERVER MISSION: The facts

As of 1 August 2014

On 24 July 2014, the OSCE decided to deploy an “**Observer Mission to the two Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk**” (official name; “Observer Mission” for short) at the Russian-Ukrainian border. Here’s what you need to know.

Why is the OSCE sending an Observer Mission to Russia?

Developments in Ukraine since November 2013 have resulted in a situation when peace and stability in the country are threatened by armed conflict in its Eastern regions. The OSCE, the largest regional security organization, has been assisting and supporting efforts to facilitate contacts between parties to the conflict at all levels, maintain an inclusive dialogue among them, and provide objective and accurate information about the security situation on the ground. The Observer Mission will be part of these efforts.

Who decided to send the Observer Mission to Russia?

The Mission is being deployed following a Permanent Council Decision No. 1130 adopted on 24 July 2014 by consensus of all 57 OSCE Participating states. This Decision follows-up on the Berlin Declaration of 2 July in which the Foreign Ministers of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine invited the OSCE to deploy OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints, in response to a Russian invitation.

What are the aims of the Observer Mission?

The Observer Mission’s work will be just one of several steps mentioned in the Berlin Declaration, which should together contribute to an effective control of the Russian-Ukrainian border. The observers are to contribute to reducing tensions and fostering stability and security. Their reports will help all participating States take informed decisions.

What is the relationship of the Observer Mission with the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine?

The Observer Mission is distinct and separate from the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

What does the Observer Mission do?

The Mission gathers information and reports on the security situation at the two checkpoints, establishes and reports facts, especially when there is a specific incident. The observers will observe activities and movements across the border at the Donetsk and Gukovo checkpoints.

Who does the Observer Mission consist of?

The mission will be composed of one Chief Observer to be appointed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, 15 observers and three administrative staff members. It will be staffed through accelerated recruitment of seconded experts. The vacancy notice for the 15 border observers was published on the OSCE website, with 31 July as deadline for applications. Staff can be recruited even before the VN is closed.

How does the Observer Mission work?

The key principles are impartiality and transparency.

There will be one Observer Team working at each checkpoint at Gukovo and Donetsk. Operating 24/7 in Teams, the unarmed Observer Teams shall deploy and operate in accordance with the Chief Observer's direction.

Where does the Mission work?

Border observers will be working at the two Russian checkpoints of Donetsk (not to be confused with the City of Donetsk in Ukraine) and Gukovo.

They will be based in the town of **Kamensk-Shakhtinsky** (Russian: Каменск-Шахтинский) in Rostov Oblast, located on the Seversky Donets River, about 25Km from the two check-points.

Any change in deployment must be agreed by all 57 participating States.

How long will the Mission last?

The Mission's mandate will run for three months, beginning on 24 July 2014. Any extension will need to be agreed by all 57 participating States.

Who do the observers report to?

The Chief Observer will regularly report through the Chairmanship to the Permanent Council as stipulated in PC.DEC/1130. The Observer Mission plans to issue weekly reports to be distributed to all 57 participating States, and reports about specific incidents or events that need to be reported immediately on as-needed basis (so-called "spot reports"). Reports will be made available to the public and media on the OSCE website at <http://www.osce.org/om>

Who provides security for the observers?

The Chief Observer is responsible for ensuring that sufficient provisions are in place to safeguard the security and safety of mission members. The security situation is constantly assessed and operations adjusted accordingly.

Does this Observer Mission include military people in uniform?

No. Visits by uniformed military personnel from OSCE participating States to Ukraine are different from the Observer Mission.

I am a journalist. How do I get in touch with the OSCE Observer Mission to get an interview / comment from the monitors?

For general media queries:

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