



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement in response to Ambassador Gyorgy Varga,  
Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission  
at two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border**

As delivered by Ms. Yevheniia Filipenko,  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1176<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
15 February 2018

**Mr. Chairperson,**

The delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes the Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border to the Permanent Council and thanks him for presenting a comprehensive report. As this is the first appearance of Ambassador Gyorgy Varga in the Permanent Council in his current position, we congratulate him on the appointment and encourage to maintain high standards of professional work, established by his predecessors, to provide for full implementation of the OM mandate under difficult conditions.

We appreciate the Mission's regular reporting on observations at the Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk. Despite its limited mandate and size, the Mission continues to provide evidence of a direct connection between the Russian authorities and Russian occupation administration in the occupied territory of Donbas. Although Russia undertook to withdraw its military, mercenaries and fighters from Ukraine, their illegal flow continues. The Mission continued to observe and report on high numbers of persons in military-style clothing, trucks and tanker trucks crossing the border in both directions. Since the beginning of its mandate, the OM observed 90 funeral and cargo vans with sign Cargo-"200" crossing the border, indicating the return to Russia of military personnel killed in action. At the Donetsk BCP less than 20% of the total numbers of trucks bound for Russia from the occupied territory of Donbas undergo an X-ray check by Russian authorities that proves their effective control on the Ukrainian side of the border. We note that due to unfavourable conditions, the observers could not observe the scanning at Gukovo BCP.

We note with deep concern that during the reporting period 1,027 crossings of people in military-style outfits were observed, thus bringing the total to 35,810 crossings of this category since the beginning of the OM's operation. These are figures from only two BCPs where the Mission has the ability to monitor merely a 40 meters stretch of a 409 km Ukrainian-Russian state border segment not controlled by the Ukrainian authorities.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

We condemn in the strongest terms the continued illegal practice of sending by Russia of the so-called “humanitarian convoys” without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and of the principles of international humanitarian law. It is notable that during the reporting period 3 Russian convoys violated Ukraine’s border at the Donetsk BCP, but since 22 August 2014 the OM observed 71 such convoys. Although the limited Ukrainian Border Guards unit continues to be present at the Donetsk BCP, during the convoy crossings it is permanently escorted by armed men in camouflage and is prevented from performing inspections and verifications of the convoys which are only observed from a distance. We urge Russia to start observing the reached agreements on safe delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid based on an international mechanism. Until this mechanism is enacted we again urge Russia to send deliveries of humanitarian nature through border check-points, controlled by the Government of Ukraine.

While Russia denies, contrary to its commitments, the conduct of permanent OSCE monitoring at the Ukrainian-Russian state border, in recent days, according to available information of the Ukrainian competent authorities, further illicit supplies from Russia into the Ukrainian territory took place: on 28 January 11 cisterns with fuel and lubricants (630 tons) arrived to a railway station in Chervona Mohyla and a convoy of heavy trucks with cargo (500 tons) was moving through Diakove, on 29 January 2 cisterns with diesel (125 tons) arrived at Illovaisk and 1 cistern with gas (18 tons) arrived at Uspenka, on 31 January 6 cisterns with fuel and lubricants (360 tons) arrived at Rovenki, on 3 February railway carriages with personnel (up to 100 persons) and military equipment (10 IFV-2) arrived in Donetsk, on 4 February 7 cisterns with fuel and lubricants (420 tons) arrived to Rovenki.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

Having signed the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014, all signatories, including the Russian Federation, undertook to ensure permanent monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian State border and its verification by the OSCE with the formation of a security zone in the border areas of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. This task remains unimplemented more than three years later. Before the OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg in 2016 and before the last Ministerial Council in Vienna in 2017 the Russian Federation was the one country that blocked respective draft OSCE decisions.

We regret that the Russian Federation continues to block the expansion of the mandate of the OSCE observation mission in Russian border checkpoints ‘Gukovo’ and ‘Donetsk’ to all sections of the border that is temporarily not under control of the Ukrainian authorities.

It only indicates Russia’s unchanged intention to fuel the conflict and hide from the international community Russia’s direct role as a party to the conflict in Ukraine’s east.

We call upon the Russian Federation to demonstrate a commitment to the implementation of the Minsk arrangements not by words, but by practical steps of

compliance with the agreed measures. Permanent monitoring by the OSCE and establishment of a security zone on the Russian side of the Ukrainian-Russian state border adjacent to the certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions is the commitment which was undertaken by Russia and which awaits its implementation.

In conclusion, we once again thank Ambassador G.Varga and his staff for their professional work and wish them successful accomplishment of their tasks.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**