



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1041 Vienna, 26 February 2015

EU Statement in Response to the Report by the Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border

The European Union warmly welcomes the Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, Mr Paul Picard, back to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his report.

Despite its, unfortunately, very limited mandate and small size, the Mission continues to make observations at the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints that provide the ever growing body of evidence of far-reaching and ongoing support for the separatists being provided from Russia, and Russia's deliberate destabilisation of eastern Ukraine. We note the regular reports of a high number of people crossing the border wearing military-style clothes. And we note the reported transfers of ambulances and "Cargo 200" lorries through the checkpoints, indicating the return to Russia of military personnel killed in action.

We note the reports of Russian so-called humanitarian convoys crossing the border at the Donetsk checkpoint without inspection by Ukrainian authorities, including the latest on 20 February that arrived without prior notice. These convoys continue without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed. We recall that the "Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements" calls for humanitarian aid to be delivered through an international mechanism.

We regret that Russian officials, fully aware of the limited mandate of the mission, continue to suggest that the mission's reports confirm that no Russian troops or military equipment cross the border. We know that this is not true.

Mr Chairman, recent developments have once again underlined the importance of border monitoring which is closely interlinked with ceasefire monitoring. Border monitoring is especially important in view of reports about the continuing influx of military equipment and personnel entering Ukraine from Russia. We would like to reiterate that effective and comprehensive monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian state border should be an integral part of a sustainable political solution, which fully upholds OSCE principles, and re-establishes Ukrainian control over its sovereign territory including the border. We recall that the Minsk package includes a commitment to re-establishing Ukrainian control over its border. We likewise recall that the Minsk-Protocol called for effective monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border and verification by the OSCE.

We therefore continue to call for a significant expansion of the Observer Mission to all border crossings not currently under the control of the Ukrainian Government as well as full monitoring of the areas between border crossings. This should be supported and coordinated with border monitoring on the Ukrainian side of the border by the SMM.

We deeply regret that the Russian Federation continues to prevent a meaningful expansion of the Observer Mission. We likewise regret that the Russia-backed separatists continue to prevent the SMM from gaining full access to the border. We once again call upon Russia to bring its influence to bear upon the separatists to ensure a full implementation of the commitments assumed under the Minsk agreements.

We call on Russia to provide, without delay, the Mission's members with the appropriate privileges and immunities.

We once again thank Mr Picard and his staff for their excellent work. We wish Mr Picard every success in his future endeavours.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY,

members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.