



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1059 Vienna, 11 June 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, Mr Paul Picard, back to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his comprehensive and interesting report.

Recent developments have once again underlined the vital importance of border monitoring in view of information about the continuing inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from Russia. We 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 Protocol calls for effective monitoring of the border and verification by the OSCE and that the Minsk Package of implementation measures includes a commitment to re-establishing Ukrainian control over its border.

The Observer Mission's very limited mandate and its small size does not provide for a comprehensive border monitoring. We therefore encourage the Chairmanship continue consultations in order to meet the calls from the overwhelming majority of participating States for a significant expansion of the Observer Mission to all border crossings currently not under control of the Ukrainian government as well as monitoring between these border crossings. This should be supported and coordinated with border monitoring on the Ukrainian side of the border by the SMM.

We regret that the Russian Federation has so far resisted such an 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 call on Russia to use its

influence with the separatists to ensure the SMM has unfettered access and the necessary security conditions to permit full and effective monitoring of areas of Ukraine's border not currently under its control.

Mr Chairman, despite its limited mandate and size, the Observer Mission continues to provide evidence of far-reaching and ongoing support for the separatists provided from Russia. We note the regular reports of a high number of people, almost 7000 during the reporting period, crossing the border wearing military style clothes and camouflage. And we note the reported transfers of ambulances, including with persons in military-style dress, and "Cargo 200" lorries through the checkpoints, implying the return to Russia of military personnel killed in action.

We are disturbed by reports of Russian so-called humanitarian convoys crossing the border at the Donetsk checkpoint without proper control or inspection by Ukrainian authorities. 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 call on Russia to provide, without delay, the Mission's members with the appropriate privileges and immunities. We also call on Russia to remove the access restrictions at the Gukovo border crossing that limit the Mission's staff to only 3 percent of the area of the crossing point.

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 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.