
Chairmanship: Sweden**1325th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 22 July 2021 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.
Suspended: 1 p.m.
Resumed: 3 p.m.
Closed: 5.25 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador T. Lorentzson

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: PRESENTATION BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2004 OSCE ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY

Chairperson, Secretary General (SEC.GAL/107/21 OSCE+), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Lichtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1209/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1179/21), Turkey (PC.DEL/1202/21 OSCE+), Holy See (PC.DEL/1183/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1174/21), Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/1203/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Albania (PC.DEL/1180/21 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/1181/21), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/1176/21 OSCE+), Canada (PC.DEL/1231/21 OSCE+), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1177/21 OSCE+), Permanent Representative of France (also on behalf of the Permanent Representatives of Andorra, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Mongolia, Norway, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden,

Turkey, United States of America and the European Union)
(PC.DEL/1175/21), Armenia

Point of order: Azerbaijan

Agenda item 2: OSCE ASIAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION WITH A
SPECIAL FOCUS ON “STRENGTHENING GOOD
GOVERNANCE AND COMBATING CORRUPTION”

Chairperson, Chairperson of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group (Albania) (PC.DEL/1196/21 OSCE+), Secretary General (SEC.GAL/108/21 OSCE+), Afghanistan (Partner for Co-operation), Australia (Partner for Co-operation), Japan (Partner for Co-operation), Republic of Korea (Partner for Co-operation), Thailand (Partner for Co-operation), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Lichtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1210/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1188/21), Turkey (PC.DEL/1200/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1185/21), United Kingdom, Ukraine

Agenda item 3: DECISION ON THE EXTENSION OF THE DEPLOYMENT
OF OSCE OBSERVERS TO TWO RUSSIAN
CHECKPOINTS ON THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN
BORDER

Chairperson

Decision: The Permanent Council adopted Decision No. 1409 (PC.DEC/1409) on the extension of the deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Ukraine (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), Canada (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision), Russian Federation (interpretative statement, see attachment 4 to the decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 5 to the decision), United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 6 to the decision)

Agenda item 4: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea*: Ukraine (PC.DEL/1187/21), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Moldova, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1208/21), Canada (PC.DEL/1237/21 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/1201/21 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1204/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1178/21), United Kingdom
- (b) *Deteriorating situation in Ukraine and continued non-implementation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1184/21), Ukraine
- (c) *Aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters*: Armenia (Annex 1)
- (d) *Seventh anniversary of the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 on 17 July 2014*: Netherlands (also on behalf of Australia (Partner for Co-operation), Belgium and Germany) (Annex 2), Canada (PC.DEL/1235/21 OSCE+), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Lichtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1211/21), Norway (PC.DEL/1198/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/1186/21), United Kingdom, Ukraine (PC.DEL/1206/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1192/21 OSCE+), Australia (Partner for Co-operation)

Agenda item 5: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Appointment of Mr. M. Kinnunen as Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group*: Chairperson
- (b) *Update on the status of the 2021 Unified Budget Proposal*: Chairperson
- (c) *Announcement of the distribution of an information circular on the summer recess (SEC.INF/30/21/Rev.1)*: Chairperson

Agenda item 6: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of the Secretary General's weekly report (SEC.GAL/104/21 OSCE+)*: Secretary General

- (b) *Migration of the OSCE Secretariat, the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High-Level Planning Group to the new Secure Microsoft Infrastructure and Windows 10 environment, conducted from 16 to 19 July 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/104/21 OSCE+)*
- (c) *Initiation of an analysis to identify ways of improving the OSCE Secretariat's internal co-ordination, collaboration and management practices: Secretary General*
- (d) *Farewell to the Head of Conference Services, Mr. A. Bell: Secretary General*

Agenda item 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *High-level international conference "Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity – Challenges and Opportunities", held in Tashkent on 15 and 16 July 2021: Uzbekistan (PC.DEL/1191/21), Tajikistan, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1189/21), Turkmenistan, Turkey (PC.DEL/1195/21 OSCE+), Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan*
- (b) *Parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic, to be held on 8 and 9 October 2021: Czech Republic (Annex 3)*
- (c) *Commemoration of the terrorist attack in Norway on 22 July 2011: Norway (PC.DEL/1197/21)*

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 29 July 2021, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



1325th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1325, Agenda item 4(c)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

The Armenian delegation would like to inform the Permanent Council about the deteriorating situation on the western segment of the Armenia-Azerbaijan State border following the provocations instigated by the Azerbaijani armed forces on 14 July near the village of Yeraskh in the Republic of Armenia, which resulted in the death of a soldier, Samvel Alaverdyan, who was killed by sniper fire.

On 19 July 2021, Azerbaijan further escalated the situation by shelling the positions of the Armenian armed forces, using in particular mortars and incendiary ammunition. Not only were the border posts of the Armenian armed forces targeted but also the adjacent territories. The fire caused by the use of incendiary ammunition affected the nearby village of Yeraskh. Moreover, the head of the community of Yeraskh, who was co-ordinating the work of the emergency services, was wounded.

To escalate the situation even further, the Azerbaijani armed forces on the same day also opened fire on border positions of the Armenian armed forces in the direction of Gegharkunik Province in the eastern part of Armenia.

These provocative and hostile actions are not isolated incidents but, rather, premeditated and planned attacks with far-reaching intentions. They occurred immediately after the president of Azerbaijan, in yet another defiant and bellicose public appearance, made false territorial and historical claims against Armenia and its sovereign territory.

Considering also the earlier incursion by the Azerbaijani armed forces into Armenian sovereign territory in the provinces of Syunik and Gegharkunik, these latest developments clearly demonstrate that the regime in Baku is trying to create new hotbeds of tension along the entire border with Armenia, both in the east and west, further undermining regional peace and security.

Moreover, the Azerbaijani authorities – by means of their provocations along the Armenia-Azerbaijan State border, their incursion into Armenian territory and their territorial claims against Armenia – are trying to remove the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from the international agenda.

The consistently provocative actions by Azerbaijan are part of a pattern and point to a meticulously planned course of action aimed at further escalating the situation along the entire border with Armenia and along the line of contact between Artsakh and Azerbaijan. It is clear that Azerbaijan in this way is trying to torpedo the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020, which it is apparently not in a position to fulfil, whereas Armenia has implemented all of that statement's provisions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The trilateral ceasefire statement signed on 9 November 2020 by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation put an end to the hostilities and the war of aggression. However, just a few days after it was signed, Azerbaijan started to flagrantly violate its provisions. The first grave violation occurred on 11 December 2020, when the special forces of Azerbaijan launched an attack on Hin Tagher and Khtsaberd, the two villages of the Hadrut region that had remained under Armenian control at the time the ceasefire was signed. Azerbaijan captured 64 Armenian soldiers during that attack – a military operation that violated the first paragraph of the statement, whereby the parties “shall stop in their current positions”.

Subsequently, Azerbaijan refused to repatriate the Armenian prisoners of war, making them out to be “terrorists”, prosecuting them and holding mock trials, thereby flagrantly violating not only international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, but also paragraph 8 of the trilateral statement of 9 November, which unequivocally lays down that the parties should exchange prisoners of war, hostages and other detainees.

Azerbaijan is also engaged in the demolition of houses and other property in the occupied territories of Artsakh to rule out any possibility of the safe and dignified return of Armenian refugees and displaced population to their homes, thereby violating the seventh paragraph of the aforementioned trilateral statement, which stipulates: “Internally displaced persons and refugees shall return to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas under the supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.”

Furthermore, paragraph 9 of the statement of 9 November begins: “All economic and transport connections in the region shall be unblocked.” There is not a single provision in the statement specifying the geographical location or area of any of the transport routes that should be used or constructed to unblock the economic infrastructure of the region. Azerbaijan's deliberate distortion of the sense of that paragraph is therefore aimed at further derailing the implementation of the statement and justifying its territorial claims against Armenia.

These are not just failures on the part of the Azerbaijani authorities but a sign of their true intentions.

The inadequate response by the international community to the use of force and the mass atrocities perpetrated against the people of Artsakh, including ethnic cleansing, encouraged Azerbaijan to make the use of force a permanent feature of its policy toolbox, thereby threatening regional security and peace.

Moreover, the inexplicable displays of diplomatic support for the ambitions of Azerbaijan by some participating States that have been engaging in questionable initiatives are detrimental to efforts aimed at rebuilding trust and establishing a lasting and sustainable peace.

Mr. Chairperson,

The actions of Azerbaijan clearly constitute a grave violation of the principles of international law and of the Helsinki Final Act, as well as of that country's specific commitments. Armenia expects a clear reaction from its international partners to such violations by Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's actions on the ground stand in stark contrast to the fine talk about "peace" and "coexistence" in which the Azerbaijani delegation and its supporters here at the OSCE so like to indulge. We have repeatedly drawn the attention of participating States to this fact, pointing to the insincerity and deceptive nature of such pronouncements.

By constantly raising the level of tensions – not least through military provocations in Artsakh and on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, as evidenced by the recent incidents – Azerbaijan aims to postpone indefinitely and endlessly the resumption of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process and, ultimately, the settlement of the conflict. Only the resumption of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process under the auspices of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group can create the conditions for lasting peace in the region.

Additionally, Azerbaijan's provocative actions, including the obstacles it is throwing in the way of resumption of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, make it impossible to start discussions on delimitation and demarcation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border – an issue that the Prime Minister of Armenia has publicly referred to on several occasions.

Armenia is willing to engage in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process in good faith and will continue to act consistently in support of the people of Artsakh's realization of their right to self-determination, despite the efforts of Azerbaijan to remove that issue from the international agenda by all means, not least by denying the very existence of Artsakh and its people. The international community must reject such an approach in the strongest possible terms.

Mr. Chairperson,

The current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is the result of a flagrant violation by Azerbaijan of several core principles of the Helsinki Final Act, namely refraining from the threat or use of force; peaceful settlement of disputes; equal rights and self-determination of peoples; and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. No one should be under any illusion that the results of the use of force, accompanied by war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law, can ever become the basis for a lasting and sustainable peace. Such a peace can only be achieved in the region through a comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which must include determining the status of Artsakh on the basis of the realization by the people of Artsakh of their inalienable right to self-determination, ensuring the safe and dignified return of recently displaced population to their homes, and preserving the cultural and religious heritage of the region.

Mr. Chairperson,

I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1325
22 July 2021
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

1325th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1325, Agenda item 4(d)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE NETHERLANDS
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA (PARTNER FOR
CO-OPERATION), BELGIUM AND GERMANY)**

Thank you. Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honour to inform you that Belgium and Germany align themselves with this statement. Earlier this afternoon we already heard the Australian Ambassador, as an OSCE Partner for Co-operation, aligning his country as well in his contribution in this room.

Last week marked seven years since the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17.

This tragedy led to the death of 298 innocent people from 17 different countries. Our hearts are with all those who lost their loved ones and we continue to share their grief.

The pursuit of truth, justice and accountability remains the top priority for the Dutch Government and for the other grieving nations.

In this context we would once again like to recall United Nations Security Council resolution 2166.

As participating States are aware, the Netherlands has submitted an inter-State application against the Russian Federation at the European Court of Human Rights for its role in the downing of flight MH17.

The Netherlands, Malaysia, Australia, Belgium and Ukraine are working together to conduct the international criminal investigation of the cause of the crash of flight MH17 and those thought to be responsible. On the basis of the criminal investigation, the Dutch Public Prosecution Service took the decision to prosecute the suspects. This trial is currently ongoing.

The Netherlands together with Belgium and Germany once again calls on Russia to accept its responsibility and co-operate fully with the ongoing investigation.

I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1325
22 July 2021
Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

1325th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1325, Agenda item 7(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Madam/Mr. Chairperson,

The Czech Republic hereby informs its OSCE partners that elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic (that is to the lower chamber of the Parliament) are going to be held on 8 and 9 October 2021.

In accordance with government resolution No. 624 of 12 July 2021 and in compliance with its OSCE commitments, the Czech Republic addressed a letter on 21 July to the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Mr Matteo Mecacci, and invited the ODIHR to observe the poll. Likewise, the government expressed in the resolution its readiness to welcome observers from OSCE participating States, as well as from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Please attach this statement to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam/Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.DEC/1409
22 July 2021

Original: ENGLISH

1325th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1325, Agenda item 3

DECISION No. 1409
EXTENSION OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF OSCE OBSERVERS TO
TWO RUSSIAN CHECKPOINTS ON THE
RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN BORDER

The Permanent Council,

Recalling its Decision No. 1130 of 24 July 2014 on the deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border (PC.DEC/1130),

Decides:

1. To extend the mandate of the deployment of OSCE observers to the two Russian border checkpoints of Donetsk and Gukovo on the Russian-Ukrainian border until 30 September 2021;
2. To approve the arrangements and the financial and human resources for the Observer Mission as contained in document PC.ACMF/50/21 of 7 July 2021. In this respect, authorizes the use of 234,000 euros from the 2019 cash surplus to fund the proposed budget for the duration of the mandate to 30 September 2021.

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Ukraine:

“Madam Chairperson,

In connection with the Permanent Council decision on the extension of the deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, the delegation of Ukraine would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Having joined consensus on the decision to extend the mandate of the OSCE Observer Mission for only another two months, the delegation of Ukraine proceeded from the understanding that it was the only way to ensure further activities by the Mission after the Russian Federation refused to give its consent on a regular four-month extension.

We regret that the position of the Russian side compelled participating States to settle for a shorter mandate of this OSCE field presence instead of ensuring a more stable functioning of the Mission, which continues to operate under unjustified restrictions imposed by the host country.

The ‘Normandy Four’ Berlin Joint Declaration of 2 July 2014 invited the OSCE to take all necessary steps to deploy OSCE observers with a view to contributing to an effective control of the Russian-Ukrainian border. Two months later, Russia signed the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014, which envisages in its paragraph 4 the establishment of permanent monitoring on the Ukrainian-Russian State border. The full implementation of this provision has a direct link to a sustainable ceasefire along the line of contact, de-escalation of the security situation in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, and peaceful resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian hybrid armed conflict.

We again urge Russia as a signatory of the Minsk agreements to pay proper attention to plenty of calls by participating States to extend the Mission’s mandate cycle for a longer period and to expand the OSCE geographical presence along the entire uncontrolled part of the Ukrainian-Russian State border.

Persistent reluctance by Russia to implement its commitments can only be attributed to its unchanged intention to continue intervention in Ukraine’s Donbas, including by sending

weapons, military equipment, ammunition, regular troops, fighters and mercenaries, and fueling the conflict. We consistently continue to urge Russia to cease immediately these dangerous and internationally wrongful acts.

The delegation of Ukraine requests that this statement be attached to the decision and registered in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.”

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

The delegation of Slovenia, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

“In connection with the decision of the Permanent Council on the extension of the deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, the European Union would like to make the following interpretative statement under the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure.

The European Union’s views on the vital importance of the monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian State border are well known. Effective and comprehensive monitoring of this border is an integral part of a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments, which re-establishes full Ukrainian control over its sovereign territory, including the border. We recall that the Minsk Protocol calls for permanent monitoring of the border and verification by the OSCE and that the Minsk Package of Measures includes a commitment to reinstate full Ukrainian control over its entire international border.

The OSCE Observer Mission’s very limited mandate and its small size do not provide for comprehensive border monitoring. Moreover, we do not see any grounds for the Russian Federation’s continued resistance to the long overdue expansion of the Observer Mission, including the improvement of its equipment, and urge it to reconsider its position. We therefore recall our support for a significant expansion of the Observer Mission to all border crossings on the Ukrainian-Russian State border currently not under control of the Ukrainian Government as well as monitoring between these border crossings.

An expansion of the Mission’s mandate should be supported and co-ordinated with border monitoring on the Ukrainian side of the border by the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM). We reiterate the need for the SMM to be ensured safe and unhindered access to all parts of the border currently not under Ukrainian government control. Further, we underline the need for equipment and freedom of movement for the Observer Mission at the crossing stations in order to monitor movements on the border more effectively.

The insistence by Russia on two-month extensions of the Observer Mission is regrettable. Such short mandates have significant adverse effects on the Mission’s operations and effective management and on the morale of the staff. This is also detrimental to the efforts to find a sustainable peaceful solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We thus urge

the Russian Federation to reconsider its position and revert to four-month, or longer, mandates.

We request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and to the journal of the day.”

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹ and Albania¹, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

¹ The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Canada:

“Madam Chairperson,

Regarding the decision of the Permanent Council on the extension of the deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, Canada would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

Canada regrets that one participating State blocks consensus on extending the border Observer Mission mandate for a longer period. The shortened mandate puts into question Russia’s supposed ‘goodwill’ in hosting the mission and moves us further away from fulfilling the Minsk agreements. As Canada and others have consistently repeated, the mandate of the border Observer Mission should be increased to ease the significant logistical and financial burdens for both the host country and the OSCE. Each renewal requires a laborious and burdensome process to negotiate and procure contracts, visas, licences and leases, and adds unneeded stress on mission members. A two-month interval to repeat and renew these processes is highly inefficient and wastes precious resources.

Madam Chairperson,

The border Observer Mission is meant to help build transparency and create a positive environment for resolving the Russia-Ukraine conflict, but this requires both sides to engage constructively in the various negotiating fora and demonstrate how they are following up on their commitments made. Canada firmly believes that the border Observer Mission must be provided with full access to the entire Russian side of the internationally recognized border, adjacent to certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, including the authority to monitor the nearby railroad tracks and all 11 official border checkpoints. The border Observer Mission also needs the necessary tools to carry out its mandate, which includes greater access to vehicles and their contents; the use of binoculars, cameras, and other technical equipment; as well as a closer working relationship with the Russian border authorities. We regret that the Russian Federation continues to resist an expanded geographical mandate and much needed equipment for the OSCE border Observer Mission.

Canada requests that this statement be attached to the decision and reflected in the journal of the day.”

PC.DEC/1409
22 July 2021
Attachment 4

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“The Russian Federation has joined the consensus regarding the Permanent Council decision on the extension of the mandate of the team of OSCE observers at the two Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk on the Russian-Ukrainian border for two months (until 30 September 2021), viewing the work of this team as a confidence-building measure outside the context of the fulfilment by the parties to the internal Ukrainian crisis – the Ukrainian Government, Donetsk and Luhansk – of their commitments within the framework of the Minsk agreements signed already after the team’s deployment.

The Russian Federation’s decision was based on the invitation made on 14 July 2014 in the wake of the Berlin Declaration issued on 2 July 2014 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Germany, France and Ukraine.

The Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014 and the Memorandum of 19 September 2014 make no mention whatsoever of the deployment of OSCE observers on the Russian side of the border with Ukraine. Nor is there any reference to this in the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements adopted on 12 February 2015 and subsequently endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202. The decision to allow OSCE observers on Russian territory and Ukrainian border guards and customs officers to be present at Russian checkpoints are solely gestures of goodwill on Russia’s part.

The long-standing work of the team, which has confirmed the consistently calm situation on the Russian-Ukrainian border, should have had a positive effect on the resolution of the internal Ukrainian crisis and induced the Ukrainian authorities to stop the punitive operation in Donbas. However, there has never been a proper response from the Ukrainian Government. With the support of foreign handlers, the Ukrainian authorities have followed the path of further militarization and armed escalation, which has resulted in new casualties and destruction. The leadership of Ukraine is not making any meaningful efforts to achieve a lasting, comprehensive political settlement of the internal conflict in the east of the country.

There is also the desire of a number of participating States to politicize the activities of the team of observers through calls to change its mandate without good reason and link its activities to the transferring of control of the border in Donbas to the Ukrainian Government in violation of the proper sequence of implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures.

We emphasize that the mandate and the places of work of the team were clearly stipulated in Permanent Council Decision No. 1130 of 24 July 2014. The modalities of the observers' work do not provide for functional co-operation with OSCE field operations in other States.

In our view, the confrontational approaches of a number of participating States to the team and to a settlement of the internal Ukrainian conflict as a whole are destroying trust and represent an abuse of Russia's goodwill. They call into question the effectiveness of such a measure and undermine the basis for further work by this OSCE field operation.

We request that this statement be attached to the adopted decision and included in the journal of today's Permanent Council meeting."

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the decision of the Permanent Council on the extension of the deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, the United Kingdom would also like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom is clear that the establishment of genuinely comprehensive monitoring of the entire segment of the Ukraine-Russia State border outside Ukrainian government control, as well as the restoration of full Ukrainian control over that State border, is essential.

While joining consensus on this decision, we are deeply disappointed that once again the host country could not agree to extend the Mission’s mandate any longer than two months. As a result, the Mission’s dedicated staff will have to continue to face unnecessary uncertainty in both their professional and personal lives. Moreover, the reduced mandate extension will increase the operational burden incurred by the Mission and impede its ability to carry out its mandate efficiently, at a time when transparency and confidence are sorely needed.

The Mission’s limited scope, as well as the excessive restrictions placed on it by the host country, mean that it already faces many challenges to carrying out its monitoring activities.

The Mission is only present at two checkpoints along an over 400-kilometre stretch of the Ukraine-Russia State border which is outside of Ukrainian government control; and even at those two checkpoints, its freedom of movement is severely limited. This impedes its ability to observe people in military-style outfits in vehicles, ambulances crossing the border during night hours, trains at Gukovo border crossing point and to assess whether vehicles are crossing into Ukraine or not – to name just a few issues the Mission has raised. Its observation is further hindered by Russia’s refusal to allow the observers to use monitoring tools such as binoculars or cameras. This is far from the comprehensive border monitoring foreseen under the Minsk agreements.

The United Kingdom commends the Mission for its ongoing efforts in these challenging circumstances. We join the many other calls on Russia to end all undue restrictions placed on the Observer Mission and to end its objection to the expansion of the Mission to the entirety of the uncontrolled section of the border. We also reiterate the importance of full, safe and unimpeded access for the Special Monitoring Mission to the entire territory of Ukraine, including the border.

Let me also take this opportunity to reiterate the United Kingdom's unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters.

I request that this statement be attached to the decision and to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.”

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the adoption of the decision for the extension of deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

The United States on numerous occasions expressed regret over Russia’s continued blockage of efforts to expand the geographic scope of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk, despite clear and continued support from other participating States to do so. The participating States have been forced to accept a limited-scope mission covering just two border checkpoints, which together account for only a few hundred metres of the 2,300-kilometre Russian-Ukrainian border, much of which Ukraine does not control.

The Mission’s purpose is to build confidence through increased transparency by observing and reporting on the situation at these checkpoints, including movements across the international border between Ukraine and Russia.

In May, Russia chose to block the standard four-month extension of the mandate for the Mission, instead reducing the mandate period to two months thereby further adding administrative complications which hamper the Mission’s ability to fulfil its already too-limited mandate. To ensure continued operation of the Mission, the United States reluctantly joined consensus on this decision and will do so for a second time. However, we note our strong opposition to this reduced mandate period, while we voice continued strong support for Ambassador Varga, his staff, and the mission they fulfil.

We note that point 4 of the Minsk Protocol delineates a clear role for the OSCE to monitor and verify both sides of the Russian-Ukrainian international border, and to create a security zone in the border areas of Russia and Ukraine. There are strong linkages between ceasefire monitoring and border monitoring, and it is to the detriment of all efforts to resolve the conflict that the OSCE approach to these activities has been impeded by one participating State.

Russia's long-standing efforts to hinder the work of this Mission and to prevent the expansion of its scope are a clear demonstration of Moscow's unwillingness to take its Minsk commitments seriously.

We cannot see any value in shortening the mandate, which runs counter to Russia's oft-professed goals of increasing the OSCE's cost-effective operation. Russia's shortened mandate sends an unproductive signal and raises questions about Russia's goals and intentions at a time when we all see value in de-escalating tensions in the region and more broadly.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson."