

---

**Chairmanship: Sweden****1336th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 23 September 2021 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.  
Suspended: 1 p.m.  
Resumed: 3 p.m.  
Closed: 5.50 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered

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

Agenda item 1: REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE CONFLICT PREVENTION CENTRE

Chairperson, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/125/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1480/21 OSCE+), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1499/21), Turkey (PC.DEL/1505/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1471/21), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1474/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Georgia (PC.DEL/1496/21 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/1476/21), Canada, Armenia (PC.DEL/1504/21), Ukraine, Switzerland, Moldova

Agenda item 2: FINANCIAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020 AND THE REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Discussion under agenda item 3

Agenda item 3: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Chairperson, OSCE External Auditor, Chairperson of the Audit Committee, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1481/21 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 Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1498/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/1472/21), United Kingdom

Agenda item 4: DECISION ON THE FINANCIAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020 AND THE REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Chairperson

**Decision:** The Permanent Council adopted Decision No. 1414 (PC.DEC/1414) on the Financial Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 and the Report of the External Auditor, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Agenda item 5: DECISION ON THE OSCE OBSERVER MISSION TO TWO RUSSIAN CHECKPOINTS ON THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN BORDER

Chairperson

**Decision:** The Permanent Council adopted Decision No. 1415 (PC.DEC/1415) on the OSCE Observer Mission to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, the text of which is appended to this journal.

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 Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Ukraine (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), United Kingdom (also on behalf of Canada) (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision), United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 4 to the decision), Russian Federation (interpretative statement, see attachment 5 to the decision)

Agenda item 6: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/1507/21), United Kingdom, Canada,

Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1503/21), Turkey (PC.DEL/1502/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1473/21), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1486/21 OSCE+)

- (b) *Deteriorating situation in Ukraine and continued non-implementation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1478/21), Ukraine
- (c) *Electoral methodology of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1482/21) (PC.DEL/1489/21), Slovenia-European Union, Belarus (PC.DEL/1485/21 OSCE+), Kazakhstan, United Kingdom (Annex 1), Canada, Switzerland, United States of America (PC.DEL/1475/21), Tajikistan
- (d) *Foreign interference in the State Duma elections in the Russian Federation held from 17 to 19 September 2021*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1483/21), Germany (Annex 2), Lithuania, Netherlands (Annex 3), United States of America (PC.DEL/1479/21)
- (e) *State Duma, regional and local elections in the Russian Federation held from 17 to 19 September 2021*: Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Canada, Georgia and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1501/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/1477/21), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1487/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Ukraine (PC.DEL/1506/21), Moldova (Annex 4), Georgia (PC.DEL/1495/21 OSCE+), Tajikistan, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1484/21), Armenia, Belarus

Agenda item 7:           REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE  
                                  CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

*Event on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, to be held in Stockholm on 30 September and 1 October 2021*: Chairperson

Agenda item 8:           REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of a written report of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/127/21 OSCE+)*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General
- (b) *Cancellation of the Secretary General's visit to the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, being held in New York from 14 to 30 September 2021*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General
- (c) *Completion of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in the OSCE field operations*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General

- (d) *Establishment of a planning and co-ordination group for the closure of the OSCE Observer Mission to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General

Agenda item 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Early parliamentary and presidential elections in Bulgaria, to be conducted on 14 November 2021*: Bulgaria (Annex 5)
- (b) *Update on the murder of Lyra McKee on 18 April 2019*: United Kingdom

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 30 September 2021, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



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

PC.JOUR/1336  
23 September 2021  
Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

---

**1336th Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1336, Agenda item 6(c)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Madam Chairperson,

We thank the Russian delegation for raising the issue of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' (ODIHR) election observation methodology. It offers an opportunity for the United Kingdom, and others, to underline our support for the ODIHR's election observation missions, and their wider work in strengthening democracy in the OSCE area.

We disagree with the Russian delegation's criticism of the ODIHR's methodology. We have, as 57 participating States, provided the ODIHR with a mandate to decide how to credibly and effectively observe elections. The use of expert needs assessment missions as part of the ODIHR's methodology allows the Organization to decide in a transparent, professional and impartial manner, the requirements for election observation missions. The consequence is that they will decide on different observation missions to meet different circumstances.

Madam Chairperson,

We have collectively provided a mandate on election observation to the ODIHR through various decisions. These numerous decisions, including Paris and Copenhagen (1990), Rome (1993), Budapest (1994), Oslo (1996), Istanbul (1999), Porto (2002), Maastricht (2003) and Astana (2010). These provide for its autonomy of action. As participating States, our role should be to support the ODIHR as it fulfils its mandate as a key enabler of the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security.

I ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



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

PC.JOUR/1336  
23 September 2021  
Annex 2

ENGLISH  
Original: GERMAN

---

**1336th Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1336, Agenda item 6(d)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY**

Madam Chairperson,

Since my Russian colleague mentioned Germany, I should like to exercise my right of reply.

The accusation that attacks were carried out against the Internet technology used in the Duma elections is known. Right after the elections, the Chairperson of the Central Election Commission made the accusation that cyberattacks had been carried out, in some cases from IP addresses in Germany.

The Federal Government condemns any interference in elections as a matter of principle.

IP addresses on their own give no indication of the authorship of cyberattacks.

If the Russian Government has further information, I would therefore ask it to make it available to us so that the facts can be checked.

The accusation construed by the Russian Federation here, as elsewhere previously, of indirect financing of Alexei Navalny by Germany is absurd.

The publication of a list of supposed supporters of Navalny at the beginning of the month is a case of imparting information worthy of protection.

This publication is therefore a violation of individual rights. We resolutely condemn this course of action.

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



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

PC.JOUR/1336  
23 September 2021  
Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

---

**1336th Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1336, Agenda item 6(d)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE NETHERLANDS**

Madam Chairperson,

In response to the statement made by the Russian delegation, I would like to briefly exercise my right of reply, since my country was mentioned.

Needless to say, the Netherlands do not influence the political affiliation of anyone in Russia, including our locally hired staff in any way. The staff members are free to make their own decision as to whom to support.

Furthermore, I understood the published data that the Russian delegation referred to – if correct – might have been obtained through a hack and published online, being a violation of Russian privacy legislation. I expect that the authorities will take appropriate action against the persons responsible and make sure this will not happen again in the future.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and I kindly request this statement to be attached to the journal of the day.



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

PC.JOUR/1336  
23 September 2021  
Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

---

**1336th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1336, Agenda item 6(e)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF MOLDOVA**

Madam Chairperson,

While welcoming the statement of the European Union, the delegation of the Republic of Moldova would like to make some remarks in its national capacity regarding the opening of the polling stations in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova for the Russian Federation's State Duma elections that took place from 17 to 19 September 2021.

We note that in response to the Russian side's request on the organization of parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration notified it about the absence of impediments to open polling stations on the territory controlled by the constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova.

At the same time, the Moldovan authorities requested the Russian side to refrain from opening any polling stations in the localities from the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, which are not under the control of the constitutional authorities.

As it was highlighted in the press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration on 18 September, we deeply regret the fact that, despite the firm and unequivocal position consistently communicated by the Moldovan authorities on this issue, the Russian side nevertheless decided to open 27 polling stations in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova thus acting in a manner that undermines the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova and contradicts the bilateral legal framework.

In the same vein, we regret about the organizing of the elections for the State Duma in other conflict areas on the territory of Ukraine and Georgia. We consider that this does not contribute to the settlement of the conflicts but rather deepens the contradictions with a clear impact on the OSCE comprehensive concept of security.

In this respect, the Republic of Moldova reiterates that a peaceful settlement of conflicts based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries affected by conflicts in their internationally recognized borders has no alternatives. We use this occasion to reaffirm our unwavering support to the diplomatic efforts aimed at the political resolution



of the protracted conflicts in the OSCE area and reiterate the need to comply with the commitments undertaken by all participating States.

I ask this statement to be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



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

PC.JOUR/1336  
23 September 2021  
Annex 5

Original: ENGLISH

---

**1336th Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1336, Agenda item 9(a)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF BULGARIA**

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to inform the Permanent Council that early parliamentary elections will be held in the Republic of Bulgaria on 14 November 2021, as well as elections for President and Vice President of the Republic of Bulgaria that have been scheduled to take place on 14 November, with a possible second round on 21 November 2021.

In accordance with the OSCE commitments on election observation, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria has the honour to extend an invitation to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE participating States to observe the aforementioned elections.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**1336th Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1336, Agenda item 4

**DECISION No. 1414  
FINANCIAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE  
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020 AND THE REPORT OF THE  
EXTERNAL AUDITOR**

The Permanent Council,

Acting in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Financial Regulations, particularly Regulations 7.05 and 8.06(e), as approved by the Permanent Council on 27 June 1996 (DOC.PC/1/96) and revised on 23 November 2017 (PC.DEC/1272),

Reiterating the importance of full transparency and accountability in the functioning of the OSCE,

Taking note of the 2020 Financial Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 and the Report of the External Auditor (PC.ACMF/60/21 of 20 September 2021),

Expressing its gratitude to the External Auditor, the Cour des comptes of France, for the work done,

Taking note of the Unqualified Audit Opinion on the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020,

1. Accepts the Financial Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020;
2. Requests the Secretary General to establish and submit to the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance not later than 31 December 2021 a work plan for follow-up to the recommendations of the External Auditor as reflected in his Report for 2020. Further requests the Secretary General to inform the Permanent Council through the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance about the implementation of this plan on a regular basis, taking into account guidance from the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance.



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

PC.DEC/1415  
23 September 2021

Original: ENGLISH

---

**1336th Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1336, Agenda item 5

**DECISION No. 1415**  
**OSCE OBSERVER MISSION 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), and referring to Decision No. 1409 of 22 July 2021 on the Observer Mission's mandate extension until 30 September 2021,

Decides:

To approve the arrangements and resources for the Observer Mission as contained in document PC.ACMF/58/21 of 17 September 2021 and, in this respect, authorizes the use of 95,800 euros from the 2019 cash surplus to fund the proposed budget.

**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 Permanent Council decision on the OSCE Observer Mission to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, the European Union would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

Having joined consensus on the decision, the European Union deeply regrets the decision by the Russian Federation to not agree to an extension of the mandate of the border Observer Mission to Gukovo and Donetsk beyond 30 September.

We reiterate that the border Observer Mission has been an important confidence-building measure informing the participating States about the situation on the ground and reporting about movements over this border, which is unfortunately not under the control of the Ukrainian government. Together with the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Trilateral Contact Group, the border Observer Mission has been an important instrument in the OSCE toolbox for resolving this conflict.

The European Union’s views on the vital importance of the monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian State border are well known. Effective and comprehensive monitoring of this border is an integral part of the Minsk agreements, which include a commitment to reinstate full Ukrainian control over its sovereign territory, including over its entire international border. We have repeatedly called for an expansion of the border Observer Mission in size and to all checkpoints along the Russian-Ukrainian State border and the areas between. The fact that Russia, as a party to the conflict, host country of this Mission and a signatory of the Minsk agreements, has decided to end the border Observer Mission confirms its lack of political will to contribute to the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

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

The candidate countries Republic of North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, and Albania<sup>1</sup>, and the EFTA countries Iceland, 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.

---

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

PC.DEC/1415  
23 September 2021  
Attachment 2

Original: ENGLISH

**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 OSCE Observer Mission 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 the consensus on the above-mentioned Permanent Council decision, Ukraine strongly condemns the decision by the Russian Federation not to further extend the mandate of the OSCE Observer Mission despite the fact that the Mission’s activities and potential extension to all border-crossing checkpoints along the Russian-Ukrainian border have always been widely supported by the absolute majority of participating States.

As it was reiterated by our delegation many times before, activities of the border Observer Mission have always been important in terms of wider efforts to provide transparency along the segment of the border between Ukraine and the Russian Federation which is temporarily not under control by the Government of Ukraine. In this vein, Russia’s decision to cease the Mission’s activities is a step back in politico-diplomatic process to solve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. It also puts in question Russia’s intentions to fulfil its international obligations in this regard.

We deplore the lack of political will on the part of the Russian Federation to engage constructively in implementation of the Minsk agreements in general, and paragraph 4 of the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014 in particular. We are firmly convinced that the OSCE monitoring and verification at the segment of the Russian-Ukrainian State border which is temporarily not under control by the Government of Ukraine is crucial for advancing peace efforts.

The delegation of Ukraine requests that this statement be attached to the Permanent Council decision and 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**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I am reading this statement on behalf of the United Kingdom and Canada.

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

We deplore Russia’s refusal as host country to extend the mandate of the Observer Mission beyond the 30 September deadline, effectively forcing the Mission to close. While the United Kingdom and Canada joined consensus on this budget proposal in order to provide the necessary resources for the OSCE to respond to the change in circumstances imposed upon the Mission by Russia, we deeply disagree with closing the Mission.

We commend the dedicated observers for their professional work, which we greatly appreciate for its contribution to OSCE transparency and confidence-building efforts.

The United Kingdom and Canada are clear that the establishment of genuinely comprehensive monitoring of the entire segment of the Russian-Ukrainian State border temporarily outside Ukrainian Government control, as well as the restoration of full Ukrainian control over that State border, is essential. We join the many calls made on Russia in this Council to engage in good faith in efforts to enhance OSCE monitoring at the border in order to fulfil this commitment under the Minsk Protocol.

Let me also take this opportunity to reiterate the [our] 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, Madam Chairperson.

In connection with the adoption of the decision on the budget for closing the OSCE’s border Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk, I would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States deeply regrets the action by the Russian Federation to block consensus to extend the OSCE border Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk. This Mission has played a valuable role for the past seven-plus years by providing transparency on movements of people and material between Russia and areas under Russia’s control in eastern Ukraine.

This small Mission’s work is fundamentally connected to the commitment Russia made when it signed the Minsk Protocol in September 2014, which ‘ensure[s] permanent monitoring on the Ukrainian-Russian State border and verification by the OSCE.’ Russia bears sole responsibility for the Mission’s closure, as its objection to continuing the Mission’s mandate is the only reason for its closure. We have deep concerns about Russia’s intentions to fulfil its international commitments and engage constructively with Ukraine.

We will continue to urge Russia to provide for OSCE monitoring along the Russian-Ukrainian border, and highlight how Russia’s closure of the border Observer Mission terminated a critical confidence-building measure. The United States calls on Russia to cease its ongoing aggression against Ukraine, contribute to a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and fulfil its Minsk obligations by permitting monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian border in those areas under Russia’s control.

I would like to conclude by thanking Ambassador Varga and his team for their important confidence-building work under very challenging conditions. This work will conclude all too soon because of Russia’s refusal to renew the border Observer Mission’s mandate. We appreciate you, and we will miss you and your reports.

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

PC.DEC/1415  
23 September 2021  
Attachment 5

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:

“While joining the consensus regarding the Permanent Council decision on the allocation of resources connected with the closure of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk on the Russian-Ukrainian border, we are obliged to note that the termination of this structure’s operations is linked to the long-standing persistent politicization of this field mission’s activities by a number of OSCE participating States. Ultimately, this has completely devalued the importance of the efficient work by the OSCE observers. They were deployed on Russian territory as a gesture of goodwill by Russia outside the context of the fulfilment by the parties to the internal Ukrainian crisis – the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk – of their obligations under the Minsk agreements, which were not signed until after the Mission’s deployment.

During the seven years of its operation, the Observer Mission has confirmed the consistently calm situation on the Russian-Ukrainian border and the absence of any military movements. The Mission’s reports were intended to have a positive effect on the resolution of the internal Ukrainian crisis and induce the Ukrainian authorities to stop the punitive operation in Donbas. However, the leadership of Ukraine is still not making any meaningful efforts to achieve a lasting, comprehensive political settlement of the internal conflict in the east of the country, nor is it taking measures to lift the inhumane socio-economic blockade of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Instead, with the support of foreign “handlers”, in Kyiv they are pursuing a path of further militarization and armed escalation, leading to continued suffering of the civilian population and destruction of civilian infrastructure in Donbas.

It has become apparent that the confidence-building measure proposed by the Russian Federation of deploying observers on its territory has not been duly appreciated by those participating States that have, instead, chosen to encourage the Ukrainian leadership’s bellicose aspirations directed against the population of Donbas. The confrontational statements heard today from the representatives of Ukraine and some other participating States once again confirmed this. Furthermore, the tendency to abuse Russia’s goodwill has manifested itself in attempts to politicize the very fact of the OSCE observers’ presence at the Russian-Ukrainian border by levelling groundless charges against the Russian Federation. It is also unacceptable to link their activities to the reinstatement of full control of the State

border in Donbas by the Government of Ukraine in violation of the sequence of implementation of the provisions of the Package of Measures. Such destructive approaches complicate the efforts being made within the framework of the OSCE to support a settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis.

Nevertheless, we note the efforts of the head of the Observer Mission, the distinguished Ambassador György Varga, and his staff in ensuring the performance of this field mission throughout its allotted mandate, especially in the challenging context of the coronavirus pandemic. The Mission succeeded in establishing good co-operation with the Russian host authorities, which made it possible to safeguard its smooth operation.

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