

PC.DEL/1226/14
24 October 2014

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1020th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 October 2014

**Regarding the extension of the mandate of the team of OSCE observers at
the Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk**

Mr. Chairperson,

As a goodwill gesture and an additional confidence-building measure, the Russian Federation is prepared to support the extension of the mandate of the team of OSCE observers at the Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk on the Russian-Ukrainian border for a further three months.

We are prepared to support the extension of the mandate for one month as well, although we still do not fully understand the reasons for the change in position. We hope that financial considerations are really behind this and not political games.

We appreciate the impartial and objective work of the OSCE observers. Russia is also prepared to continue to ensure comfortable and safe working conditions for the observers. On 15 October, the Russian Government signed an order on the provision of assistance to the OSCE observers to ensure their activities at the Gukovo and Donetsk vehicle checkpoints on the State border of the Russian Federation and also in the border territory within the Rostov region. This primarily concerns the safety of the observers, resolving customs issues, and communications. Unfortunately, in view of the absence of a charter and the shortcomings of our Organization, it has proven impossible to grant other immunities.

We have taken note of the comments made today by our colleagues. In that connection, it is worth recalling that Russia's invitation to the OSCE to send a team of observers to the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints was a goodwill gesture, and therefore claims that we are blocking something are inappropriate. Whether or not to invite observers and how many is our sovereign right. Our checkpoints are working reliably and do not require any kind of reinforcement.

Russia has also met its Ukrainian partners halfway. In accordance with the bilateral agreement between the border authorities of our countries, a group of 58 Ukrainian border guards and customs officers have been deployed at the Donetsk checkpoint since 15 August

and the staff were rotated in September. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian border guards are not making use of all of the opportunities provided to them by the Russian authorities. For instance, they refused to inspect the Russian humanitarian convoys. Nevertheless, as was seen in the slides shown by the acting head of the team of OSCE observers, Paul Picard, at a recent meeting of the Permanent Council, they are able to observe the checkpoint operations directly from their camp.

As for the other side of the border, the segment in question is controlled by the militias so it is necessary to talk to them and not the Russian Federation. The same also applies to the requests that all Ukrainian checkpoints on the border be returned to Ukrainian control. Let us repeat: talk to the militias and not us. The Minsk agreements between the Ukrainian leaders and the militia representatives on the ceasefire reached with the assistance of Russia and the OSCE formalized the status quo. There was no talk in Milan of changing this. In Milan the focus was on the need to reliably secure and monitor the line of separation between the parties to the conflict. Paragraph 4 of the Minsk Protocol concerns the monitoring of the Ukrainian side of the border and does not touch upon questions regarding the deployment of OSCE observers to Russian checkpoints. As for the border with Ukraine, on the Russian side, we assume full responsibility for security and the border regime.

Attempts to distort the essence of what the Ukrainian leaders and the militia representatives agreed to in Minsk are inadmissible in our view. At this time, the main priority is to ensure comprehensive compliance with the ceasefire regime, so as to create the conditions for a political settlement of the conflict and the establishment of an inclusive nationwide dialogue in Ukraine with the participation of all regions and all political forces of the country and with respect for their rights and interests.

Thank you for your attention.