



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement in response to Ambassador György Varga,
Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission
at two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border**

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1342nd meeting of the Permanent Council,
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Madame Chairperson,

Ukraine warmly welcomes Ambassador György Varga to the Permanent Council. We regret, that due to Russia's destructive decision not to extend the Observer Mission's mandate any more, this is the last report on the activities by this OSCE field operation which had always been contributing to wider OSCE's efforts aimed at providing transparency along the segment of the border between Ukraine and the Russian Federation which is temporarily not under control by the Government of Ukraine.

I would like to thank you, Ambassador, and your able team for all the important work, done during the whole period of the Mission's operation. I am sure, that your personal contribution as a Head of the Mission in this regard is very much appreciated by the participating States.

Unfortunately, the Observer Mission has always operated in difficult and restrictive conditions, which used to make the important task of comprehensive monitoring at the two BCPs almost impossible.

At the same time since its deployment in 2014 and until 30 September the Mission has, inter alia, observed the movement of 25,069,781 persons; 39,487 people in military-style outfits; 247,834 trucks and 54,769 cargo minivans.

Having no other option but to pick up the sounds of trains the Mission nevertheless has managed to report on movements of 7,263 trains.

The OM regularly used to observe a significant number of different types of vehicles bearing "LPR" and "DPR" plates, illegally crossing the border in both directions.

This data is difficult to imagine, especially taking into account that it was collected in mentioned restrictive conditions and at only 2 out of 11 BCPs on the segment of state border between Russia and Ukraine, which is temporarily not under control by the Government of Ukraine.

Mentioned enormous volume of illegal cross-border movements is only a partial reflection of Russia's open and blatant violations of its international commitments including those, envisaged by the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept, adopted by all participating States by the Ministerial Council Decision N2/05 in Ljubljana.

Each of 100 so-called Russian convoys, observed by the Mission, has illegally crossed into Ukraine through the Donetsk BCP in breach of international humanitarian law and Russia's commitments as the OSCE participating state.

For years of the OM's operation the Russian Federation could not provide any grounded explanations on mentioned violations. Instead of this, Russia continued fueling conflict it had started against Ukraine, trying to conceal any facts about Russian illegal military presence in Donbas, including by the means of closing this Mission.

Current situation is just another reminder, that transparency at the Russian-Ukrainian border is an integral part of peaceful resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict. Without withdrawal of Russian occupation forces and illegal armed formations from the sovereign territory of Ukraine followed by reinstating of full control over the Ukrainian-Russian border by the Government of Ukraine, we should hardly expect any progress in politico-diplomatic efforts to solve this conflict.

Madam Chairperson,

Ukraine strongly condemns the destructive decision by the Russian Federation to close the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk.

Taking into account the ongoing Russian military build-up along the state border of Ukraine and in occupied Crimea, Russia-imposed chronic restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement, especially in the border areas of the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the issue of security and transparency on the state border between Russia and Ukraine has to be prioritized on the OSCE's agenda.

In conclusion I would like to once again thank Ambassador Varga for his and the Mission's monitors dedicated work and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson