

JOINT STATEMENT
BY THE CO-SPONSORS OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL DRAFT
DECISION ON THE OSCE PERMANENT MONITORING AND
VERIFICATION OF THE AREAS ADJACENT TO THE UKRAINIAN-
RUSSIAN STATE BORDER WHICH ARE TEMPORARILY NOT UNDER
CONTROL OF THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT AT THE TWENTY-
SEVENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

(Tirana, 4 December 2020)

1. This Statement is delivered on behalf of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America as co-sponsors of the OSCE Ministerial Council Draft Decision “On the OSCE Permanent Monitoring and Verification of the Areas Adjacent to the Ukrainian-Russian State Border which are Temporarily Not Under Control of the Ukrainian Government”.
2. We reaffirm our strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.
3. We also reaffirm our unwavering support for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (hereinafter, the SMM) and its respective mandate, which provides for the safe and secure access of the SMM throughout Ukraine. This includes all areas adjacent to the Ukrainian-Russian state border, which encompasses those areas temporarily not under control of the Ukrainian Government.
4. We recall that the SMM mandate was adopted on March 21, 2014 by the OSCE Permanent Council Decision № 1117, unanimously supported by all 57 participating States, including the Russian Federation.
5. We also recall the Commonly Agreed Conclusions of the Normandy Summit (Paris, 9 December 2019) by the President of the Russian Federation, the President of Ukraine, the President of the French Republic and the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, in which they underlined that the SMM should be able to use all possibilities of the 21 March 2014 mandate and have safe and secure access throughout Ukraine in order to fully implement its mandate.
6. We express our deep concern about the ongoing restrictions to the SMM’s movement in areas adjacent to the Ukrainian-Russian state border which are temporarily not under control of the Ukrainian Government.
7. We also express our deep concern at regular reports by the OSCE Border Observer Mission, at two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian state border, about persons in military-style outfits and vehicles regularly crossing the Russian-Ukrainian state border in both directions.

8. We recall that paragraph 4 of the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014, signed by the Russian Federation and Ukraine with facilitation by the OSCE, envisages permanent monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border and verification by the OSCE with the establishment of security zones in the border areas of Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

9. We underline the importance of comprehensive OSCE monitoring along the Ukrainian-Russian state border. In this regard, we emphasize the urgent need to increase transparency along the segment of the border which is temporarily not under control of the Ukrainian Government. We call for the SMM to be given safe, secure, unconditional and unimpeded access to the areas along the state border between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and for the strengthening of OSCE monitoring capacities.

10. We call on the Russian Federation to demonstrate a constructive approach in response to OSCE participating States' efforts aiming to remove the limitations of activities and to expand the OSCE Border Observer Mission operation, currently at the Russian Checkpoints "Gukovo" and "Donetsk", to other Russian border checkpoints and areas between them along the segment of the state border between Ukraine and Russia, which are temporarily not under control of the Ukrainian Government, as envisaged by our joint proposal for the OSCE Ministerial Council Draft Decision that did not reach consensus due to the unconstructive position of one OSCE participating state.

11. We emphasize that the establishment of OSCE permanent monitoring and verification of the areas adjacent to the Ukrainian-Russian state border, which are temporarily not under control of the Ukrainian Government, needs to remain on the OSCE's agenda. This includes the SMM's presence in these areas, opening additional Forward Patrol Bases and Patrol Hubs, placing monitors near formerly existing and now temporarily closed border check-points, more comprehensive use of the SMM's technical assets, including the unmanned aerial vehicles and cameras, and assigning SMM mobile patrols to conduct robust monitoring along the border.

12. We are strongly determined to continue working in this regard, so that the draft decision as presented by our countries this year is adopted and subsequently implemented.