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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1041st MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 February 2015

**In response to the statement by the OSCE Chief Observer at the Russian
checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the OSCE Chief Observer at the two Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk, Mr. Paul Picard, to today's Permanent Council meeting. We value the impartial and objective work of the OSCE observers.

We note the prompt and factual reports by the observer team. They record the real state of affairs on the border, the flow of refugees and, contrary to speculations, confirm the absence of Russian troop movements. We also note the amazing ability of the European Union representative to focus solely on the negative aspects and draw his own conclusions, which are in no way supported by the facts cited in the reports.

The reports provide additional evidence of the difficulties faced by the civilian population in south-eastern Ukraine who as a result of the hostilities have been forced to seek refuge in Russia or simply travel there to obtain essential goods from shops on Russian territory. The complaints by refugees from Donbas are evidence that the humanitarian aid reaching the region is still not enough. Ambulances regularly pass through the checkpoints.

As we have already stressed repeatedly, Russia cannot remain indifferent to the serious humanitarian disaster unfolding in Donbas, unlike the European Union and the United States of America and indeed Kyiv itself. We therefore regularly send convoys of humanitarian aid to the civilian population in south-eastern Ukraine in accordance with international humanitarian law.

We welcome the close attention paid by the OSCE observer team to the crossing of humanitarian convoys through the Donetsk border crossing point. We are operating in an open and transparent manner. We notify Ukraine in advance of the humanitarian convoys' cargo, and we inform the OSCE Secretariat and Chairmanship. In any case, the convoys proceed through the Donetsk checkpoint, where in addition to the OSCE observers a team of Ukrainian border guards and customs officers have been deployed since 15 August of last

year in accordance with a bilateral agreement between the Russian and Ukrainian border authorities. Each time a convoy arrives, they are expressly invited to inspect, together with their Russian colleagues, the humanitarian cargo entering Ukrainian territory. The OSCE observers confirm that the Ukrainian border guards and customs officers have accepted these invitations on several occasions. Inexplicably, however, they do not do so on every occasion, otherwise they would be able to see for themselves that the rumours being spread by some about the convoys' load are unfounded.

We are willing to consider the possibility of extending the observer team's current mandate for another three months. In that connection, we take the position that the place of deployment and functions of the OSCE observer team are clearly defined by the parameters of its mandate approved by Permanent Council Decision No. 1130 of 24 July 2014.

We would also like to remind delegations that the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014 does not touch upon questions regarding the deployment of OSCE observers on the Russian side of the border with Ukraine. I suggest that the United States representative should therefore carefully read what is written in the Protocol. Nor is there any mention of this in the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements adopted on 12 February 2015 and subsequently approved by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202. Point 9 of the Package of Measures refers to "restoration of full control of the State border by the Government of Ukraine throughout the conflict zone". This should begin on the first day following the local elections and be completed following a comprehensive political settlement by the end of 2015 "in consultation and by agreement with the representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions". Thus, Russia did not assume any "commitments" in Minsk with regard to OSCE monitoring on its territory, as some of our colleagues are trying to suggest. This is an unscrupulous attempt to twist the agreement reached by the presidents of the four countries.

We are also willing to continue to ensure comfortable and safe working conditions for the OSCE observers. In response to the concerns regarding their working conditions, we agreed to increase the number of observers from 16 to 22. In view of the OSCE's lack of international legal personality, privileges and immunities can be granted to Observer Mission staff only on a bilateral basis through the embassies in Russia of those countries whose citizens are serving as observers.

The necessary assistance in ensuring the security of the Observer Mission and resolving customs issues is provided on the basis of the Russian Government Order of 15 October 2014.

Thank you for your attention.