



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

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

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1269<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
28 May 2020

**Mr. Chairperson,**

We join other delegations in welcoming Mr. György Varga, the Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, back to the Permanent Council.

We thank you, Ambassador, for the report presented today. Your appearances to the Permanent Council continue to serve as reminders to the OSCE participating States on the critical importance of transparency at the Russian-Ukrainian border for the purposes of overall resolution of the hybrid armed conflict between our two countries.

Enhancing transparency at the border remains a formidable task, especially nowadays, when the Russian Federation is so eager to use COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse for even further restriction of activities of another OSCE field mission, that is the SMM, in the occupied parts of Donbas adjacent to the border.

Exposing Russia's illegal activities in those areas must continue. It limits to some extent the scale of transboundary crossings of military hardware, personnel and ammunition along the uncontrolled segment of the border, as well as contributes to the overall international efforts to foster stability and security in the conflict-affected areas.

It also reminds Russia of its own commitments undertaken within the Minsk agreements on the return of control of the border to the Government of Ukraine. Without this, a comprehensive political resolution, which includes withdrawal of the illegal armed formations followed by local elections in Donbas held under Ukrainian legislation and OSCE standards, remains elusive.

In this vein, we reiterate our call to the Russian side to stop objecting to the expansion of the geographic scope of the Mission to the entire uncontrolled segment of the border. Monitoring of only two official border crossing points out of 409 km

does in no way allow comprehensive monitoring, which all OSCE participating States, with the only exception of Russia, expect from the Mission.

**Chief Observer,**

We welcome the fact that ongoing COVID-19 crisis has not undermined the Mission's regular effectiveness in the observation and reporting tasks. We took note of the facts provided by the Mission, which expose Russia's ongoing support for its armed formations in Donbas. Fourteen ambulances, three funeral service vehicles and 120 crossings of people in military-style outfits, some of them wearing, I quote, "badges or emblems of so-called "DPR", "LPR" and/or "Novorossiya" from Russia into Ukraine and back were observed during the reporting period.

Those numbers would be even bigger if the observers were free to move within the BCPs and, thus, be able to clearly assess all crossings into Ukraine and back. We, along with other participating States, continue to strongly condemn the impediments to the Mission's activities, imposed by the Russian authorities. The rules prohibiting use of any observation tools, including binoculars, technical surveillance equipment and UAVs, as well as so-called "recommendations" of the host country for the border observers not to initiate conversations with by-passers, must be immediately lifted.

Having in mind the most severe restrictions imposed by the Russian side on the activities of the BOM and the SMM, we continue to welcome the good working relations, information exchange and cooperation maintained between the two OSCE field missions. This cooperation remains useful for providing comprehensive picture of the developments on the ground to the participating States.

I once again thank Ambassador György Varga and his able team for their dedicated work aimed at enhancing transparency at the Ukrainian-Russian state border.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**