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**Chairmanship: Sweden****1342nd PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 28 October 2021 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)  
  
Opened: 10 a.m.  
Suspended: 1.15 p.m.  
Resumed: 3 p.m.  
Closed: 4.10 p.m.
  
2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered  
Ms. U. Grufman
  
3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:  
  
Agenda item 1: REPORT OF THE CHIEF OBSERVER OF THE OSCE  
OBSERVER MISSION AT THE RUSSIAN CHECKPOINTS  
GUKOVO AND DONETSK FOR THE PERIOD  
17 AUGUST–30 SEPTEMBER 2021

Chairperson, Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk (PC.FR/37/21 OSCE+) (PC.FR/38/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1692/21), Hungary (Annex 1), Turkey (PC.DEL/1700/21 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/1679/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/1666/21), Canada (Annex 2), Norway, Switzerland, Germany (also on behalf of France) (PC.DEL/1683/21), Georgia (PC.DEL/1691/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1671/21), Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/149/21 OSCE+)

Agenda item 2:           REPORT BY THE OSCE PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR IN  
                                  UKRAINE

Chairperson, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, United Kingdom, Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1696/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1672/21 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/1697/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1668/21), Norway, Ukraine (PC.DEL/1680/21)

Agenda item 3:           REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/1681/21), United Kingdom, Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1693/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/1670/21), Turkey (PC.DEL/1699/21 OSCE+), Canada (PC.DEL/1688/21 OSCE+), Switzerland
- (b) *Deteriorating situation in Ukraine and continued non-implementation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1675/21), Ukraine, United Kingdom
- (c) *Democracy and democratic elections in the OSCE region:* United States of America (PC.DEL/1673/21), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1695/21), Canada (PC.DEL/1689/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Georgia, Belarus (PC.DEL/1682/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1677/21), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1684/21 OSCE+), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

Agenda item 4:           REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE  
                                  CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Briefing on the monthly topic of the Swedish OSCE Chairmanship for October 2021, which is democracy:* Chairperson
- (b) *2021 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting, held in Vienna and via video teleconference on 18 and 19 October 2021:* Chairperson

- (c) *Meeting between the Chairperson-in-Office and the staff members of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, held via video teleconference on 27 October 2021: Chairperson*
- (d) *2021 Human Dimension Seminar on “Preventing and combating violence against women and girls”, to be held in Warsaw and via video teleconference on 16 and 17 November 2021: Chairperson*
- (e) *Drawing of lots to establish the preliminary order of statements for the Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, to be carried out on 4 November 2021: Chairperson*

Agenda item 5:           REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of a written report of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/148/21 OSCE+): Director of the Office of the Secretary General*
- (b) *Meeting between the Secretary General and the President of Moldova, H.E. Ms. M. Sandu, held on 21 October 2021: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/148/21 OSCE+)*
- (c) *Visit of the Secretary General to South-Eastern Europe from 22 to 27 October 2021: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/148/21 OSCE+)*
- (d) *Update on the COVID-19 situation across the OSCE executive structures: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/148/21 OSCE+)*

Agenda item 6:           ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1676/21)*
- (b) *Presidential election in Uzbekistan, held on 24 October 2021: Uzbekistan, United Kingdom, Turkey (PC.DEL/1698/21 OSCE+), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1694/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/1674/21), Turkmenistan, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1678/21), Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1685/21 OSCE+)*

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 4 November 2021, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1342  
28 October 2021  
Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

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**1342nd Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1342, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF HUNGARY**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, however we would like to make the following additional remarks in our national capacity.

First of all, let me use this opportunity to warmly welcome you, Ambassador Varga, back to the Permanent Council, and we thank you for your comprehensive report.

Madam Chairperson,

Hungary fully supported the impartial and professional work of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk throughout its existence. Hungary fully supported the impartial and professional work of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk. Thanks to your tireless engagement you ensured the operation of the Mission in the last four years and despite the constantly challenging conditions, the Mission has permanently maintained its activity at the border checkpoints. In this context, we would like to highlight that thanks to your duty of care, the border Observer Mission was the only OSCE field mission whose work had not been interrupted by the pandemic. You ran an extremely tight ship, with the bare minimum of personnel doing unusually long shifts, where even granting due time to rest and holidays was not a given. You did this with the utmost attention to duty of care and human decency, factors that are easily forgotten in a security environment.

We also appreciated, along with your colleagues, that you could establish and maintain an excellent co-operation with the different authorities of the host country, which could facilitate the work of the Mission and improved the working conditions of the Mission.

Madam Chairperson,

As we stated earlier, we regret the closure of the border Observer Mission. Sadly, with this, the OSCE's role in the resolution of the conflict in and around Ukraine is weakening. The closure of the Mission won't help us understand better the situation on the ground. With the closure we find ourselves having less confidence, transparency and dialogue, which are still in high demand in our Organization. In this respect, we stress again,

that the border Observer Mission's monitoring activity was an important and irreplaceable confidence-building measure and an essential part of the OSCE's contribution to the resolution of the conflict.

Madam Chairperson,

Please allow me a few remarks on the support side of both the operation and the closure of the Mission. We believe visits, and by that, we mean regular and meaningful visits to the field missions from officials and staff of the headquarters are both crucial and indispensable. This, and not statements shows that the Organization cares, that the missions carry out an essential role, and that officials are there for them. This is a role that no one else can and should play. Participating States also deserve information and notification of major changes, transitions, and we believe closures are such instances of common attention. Heads of missions deserve clear guidelines and commonly accepted, clear policies that they can rely on in good faith when they carry out their daily job, that, it needs to be reminded here, is a world away from the neatly air-conditioned offices of downtown Vienna.

In this respect, we particularly welcome that the Secretary General has launched the process of functional review of the Organization. We are convinced, that the reform is very much needed, as we could all experience its necessity. I can already ensure the Secretary General about Hungary's support in this vein. As we have already expressed our engagement by having seconded an excellent expert to the Office of the Secretary General in order to support the Secretary General in enhancing good governance and improving the internal justice system. This topic is going to remain in the centre of attention of my country in the coming years and I wish to express our unwavering commitment to this process that I believe will define the legacy of both the Organization as well as its leadership.

Dear Ambassador Varga,

In conclusion, let me share our sincere appreciation for the excellent work that you Ambassador and your team provided, while working under extremely challenging circumstances. We believe that your professionalism and personal dedication to fulfilling the mission in the last four years have been exemplary. The Mission has continuously fulfilled its mandate by ensuring a permanent monitoring of the border crossings and by regularly informing the Permanent Council about its activities. In this context, we express our appreciation, that the participating States were informed regularly and timely by your numerous spot and weekly reports, informal briefings and the detailed and informative reports here in the Permanent Council. In conclusion, I would like to echo the statement of the European Union, and look forward to the moment when we welcome you back in the OSCE.

We request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

I thank you for your attention.



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**1342nd Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1342, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to begin by expressing Canada's gratitude to Ambassador Varga for his valued and important work. The professionalism, impartiality, and transparency exemplified by Ambassador Varga and his entire team these past seven years, despite difficult circumstances and a truncated mandate due to one participating State, have been impressive and noteworthy. The mission has provided valuable information on the movement of people and material between the Russian Federation and areas under the control of Russian-backed militants in eastern Ukraine.

Ambassador Varga, the safety and security of you and your team has always been of primary importance and we thank you for the care and leadership you have demonstrated. Your uninterrupted presence in the face of high COVID-19 infection rates in your host country is admirable and we appreciate your open communication on this and other issues with participating States. Despite the limited resources and brief mandate periods, your mission provided a unique and reliable source of information on movements across the Ukraine-Russia State border and your mission will leave a lasting mark on monitoring stability and security in the region. This clear and impartial impression of the situation at the border is concluding too soon. We are deeply concerned by the amount of crossings by alleged "humanitarian" Russian convoys and personnel in "military-style outfits" that will now go unrecorded in your absence. We now only have eyes on any movements into non-government-controlled areas from government-controlled Ukraine, but none on the transport of military equipment, ammunition, personnel, and other support from the Russian Federation.

Madam Chairperson,

It remains clear to us that the Russian Federation never intended to provide the border Observer Mission with a sufficient mandate and capacity to observe the entire Ukraine-Russia State border not under control of the Government of Ukraine. They never allowed the mission to use the equipment it needed; never agreed to a mandate to observe the entire border; never allowed the border Observer Mission to approach the vehicles to effectively monitor their occupants; and never agreed to longer extensions. Finally, they shut down the mission despite the overwhelming majority of participating States expressing a

desire to see increased transparency and a positive environment for resolving the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

This disregard for the border Observer Mission's work and mandate is reflective of the Russian Federation's overall position towards the implementation of the Minsk agreements, which call for effective and comprehensive monitoring of the border. It signals an indifference for conflict-prevention and confidence-building, as well as for the OSCE's effectiveness, which lies in participating States using the OSCE's various structures to resolve issues peacefully rather than impeding their mandate or closing them down altogether.

Madam Chairperson,

One last time, we underline that the border Observer Mission's work has been highly valued by Canada and we applaud Ambassador Varga's dedication and commitment under limiting circumstances. We wish you a hopeful and productive future.

I would ask that my statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.