



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N°1082
Vienna, 10 December 2015**

**EU Statement in Response to the Report by the Chief
Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian
checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border**

The European Union warmly welcomes the Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian checkpoints, Mr Simon Eugster, to the Permanent Council for the first time. We thank him for his report.

Mr. Chairman, despite its limited mandate and size, the Observation Mission continues to provide evidence of support for the separatists provided from Russia. We note the regular reports of a high number of people, almost 4800 during the reporting period, crossing the border wearing military style clothes and camouflage. We once again note the reported minivans marked “Cargo 200” crossing the checkpoints, suggesting the return to Russia of military personnel killed in action.

We deeply regret that Russian so-called “humanitarian convoys” continue to cross the border without proper control or inspection by Ukrainian authorities. Recently, the 45th of its kind was reported. These convoys continue without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and in clear violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and without fundamental international humanitarian principles being observed.

Recent developments have once again underlined the importance of border monitoring in light of information about the continued presence of military equipment and personnel from Russia in separatist held areas. Effective and comprehensive monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian state border is an integral part of a sustainable political solution, which fully upholds OSCE principles and commitments and re-establishes Ukrainian control over its sovereign territory, including the border. We recall that the Minsk Protocol calls for effective monitoring of the border and

verification by the OSCE and that the Minsk Package of implementation measures includes a commitment to re-establishing Ukrainian control over its border.

The Observer Mission's very limited mandate and its small size does not provide for a comprehensive border monitoring. We regret that the Russian Federation has so far resisted an expansion of the Observer Mission despite the calls from the majority of participating States for a significant expansion to all border crossings currently not under control of the Ukrainian government as well as monitoring between these border crossings. Furthermore, such an expansion should be supported by and coordinated with border monitoring on the Ukrainian side of the border by the SMM. This requires unfettered access to areas of Ukraine's border currently not under its control and we again call on Russia to use its influence with the separatists in this regard.

We call on Russia to remove the access restrictions at the Gukovo border crossing that limit the Mission's staff to only 3 percent of the area of the crossing point, and ensure availability of convenient positioning for monitors at the Donetsk BCP to be able to observe relevant details of the border crossing.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.