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PC.DEL/840/21  
31 May 2021

ENGLISH only



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1317  
Vienna, 28 May 2021**

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES  
OF PROCEDURE OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-  
OPERATION IN EUROPE**

In connection with the decision of the Permanent Council on the extension of the deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, the European Union would like to make the following interpretative statement under the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure.

The European Union's views on the vital importance of the monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian State border are well known. Effective and comprehensive monitoring of this border is an integral part of a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments, which re-establishes full Ukrainian control over its sovereign territory, including the border. We recall that the Minsk Protocol calls for permanent monitoring of the border and verification by the OSCE and that the Minsk Package of Measures includes a commitment to reinstate full Ukrainian control over its entire international border.

The OSCE Observer Mission's very limited mandate and its small size do not provide for comprehensive border monitoring. We therefore recall our support for a significant expansion of the Observer Mission to all border crossings on the Ukrainian-Russian-State border currently not under control of the Ukrainian Government as well as monitoring between these border crossings. This should be supported and co-

ordinated with border monitoring on the Ukrainian side of the border by the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) and we reiterate the need for the SMM to be assured safe and unhindered access to all parts of the border currently not under Ukrainian Government control since border and ceasefire monitoring are very closely interlinked. Further, we underline the need for sufficient equipment and sufficient freedom of movement for the Observer Mission at the current crossing stations in order to monitor movements on the border more effectively.

We also do not see any grounds for the Russian Federation's continued resistance to the long overdue expansion of the Observer Mission, including the improvement of its equipment and urge it to reconsider its position.

The request by Russia to reduce length of the mandate to just two months puts the Russian Federation's support for the Observer Mission into question and sends an unfortunate political signal. Moreover, the Mission's mandate will end just before the summer recess, which also puts into serious question whether Russia is in fact seeking not to extend it beyond July 31<sup>st</sup>. We trust that we will have constructive discussions on the next renewal of the mandate.

It is with reluctance that we accept a two-month extension. We are deeply disappointed that, due to the position of the Russian Federation, no consensus was possible on a four-month extension of the Observer Mission. This means that discussions on an extension of the mandate will have to be carried out every few weeks. The reduction will have significant adverse effect on the Mission's ability to implement its mandate, as well as on its operations and effective management. This is detrimental to the Mission's work and to the efforts to find a sustainable peaceful solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

We request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and to the Journal of the Day.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.