



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1325 Vienna, 22 July 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. Moreover, we 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. 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.

An expansion of the Mission's mandate should be supported and co-ordinated with border monitoring on the Ukrainian side of the border by the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM). We reiterate the need for the SMM to be ensured safe and unhindered access to all parts of the border currently not under Ukrainian Government control. Further, we underline the need for equipment and freedom of movement for the Observer Mission at the crossing stations in order to monitor movements on the border more effectively.

The insistence by Russia on two-month extensions of the Observer Mission is regrettable. Such short mandates have significant adverse effects on the Mission's operations and effective management and on the morale of the staff. This is also detrimental to the efforts to find a sustainable peaceful solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We thus urge the Russian Federation to reconsider its position and revert to 4-month, or longer, mandates.

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 countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA 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.