

PC.DEL/896/16

17 June 2016

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1105th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 June 2016

**In response to the report by the
Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints
of Gukovo and Donetsk, Mr. Flavien Schaller**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Schaller,

We are pleased to welcome you as the Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at the two Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk to this meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council and we thank you for your informative report.

We note the effective co-operation with the authorities of the Rostov region, the work in strict accordance with your current mandate, and the Mission's factual reports. The observers have noted a calm situation at the border and the effective work by Russian customs officers and border guards, and confirmed that there are no movements of weapons and military equipment. Every week the Observer Mission documents Ukrainian refugees entering Russia and returning to Ukraine, and also a flow of Donbas residents travelling to the Rostov region for a couple of hours to obtain food and medicines and to use cash dispensers. This confirms the difficult humanitarian situation in south-eastern Ukraine.

The observers report the involvement of Ukrainian customs officers and border guards in the inspection of Russian humanitarian convoys. There have been no suspicious cargoes.

As for the privileges and immunities of the OSCE observers at the Russian checkpoints, in view of the OSCE's lack of international legal personality, the only possibility is to accredit the Mission staff at the embassies of the respective countries in Russia. Russian departments are doing everything possible to ensure comfortable and safe working conditions for the OSCE observers, guided by the Russian Government Order of 15 October 2014.

Mr. Chairperson,

Unfortunately, today's discussion once again confirms that the OSCE remains a "hostage" to the politicized approaches of certain countries, which put their own interpretation on high-level political agreements and do not appreciate the gesture of goodwill by their partners.

In connection with the statements we have heard on ensuring control of the entire Russian-Ukrainian border, we should like to point out that Russia shares a border with 14 different countries. Our borders are reliably protected by the border service and do not require additional international monitoring. We would remind you that the OSCE observers at the checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk were deployed at Russia's invitation as a goodwill gesture in the wake of the Berlin Declaration of 2 July 2014 by the Normandy quartet foreign ministers. I wish to stress that international checkpoints at the border are restricted-access facilities.

We would suggest that those who have tried to juggle the provisions of the Minsk Protocol and Package of Measures today carefully familiarize themselves with the texts of those documents in the original. As for the border regions of Russia's neighbouring States, questions related to ensuring security there should be addressed to those who control these territories and not us.

In conclusion, allow me once more to thank Mr. Flavien Schaller, who is carrying out his work in this responsible position with great dignity, and wish him continued success.

Thank you for your attention.