

OSCE MONITORING MISSION TO UKRAINE: The facts

As of 11 April 2014

On 21 March 2014, the OSCE decided to deploy a Monitoring Mission of 100 civilian observers to Ukraine. In a little more than two weeks the projected number of monitors was deployed across the country. Here's what you need to know.

Why is the OSCE sending a Monitoring Mission to Ukraine?

Developments in Ukraine since November 2013 have resulted in deep splits between different parts of Ukraine's society along ethnic, linguistic and political lines. Peace and stability in the country are fragile. Participating States of the OSCE, the largest regional security organization, decided to assist and support Ukraine.

Who decided to send the Monitoring Mission to Ukraine?

The Mission is being deployed following a request to the OSCE by Ukraine's government and a consensus agreement by all 57 OSCE's participating States.

What are the aims of the Monitoring Mission?

The monitors are to contribute to reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability and security. They also help to monitor and support the implementation of all OSCE principles and commitments.

What does the Mission do?

The Mission engage with authorities at all levels, civil society, ethnic and religious groups and local communities to facilitate dialogue on the ground to reduce tensions. The Mission will gather information and report on the security situation, establish and report facts in response to specific incidents, including those concerning alleged violations of fundamental OSCE principles.

Who does the Mission consist of?

The Mission consists of 100 civilian unarmed monitors from OSCE participating States; they are supported in their work by local staff from Ukraine. Each participating State can second monitors to take part in the Mission. The Mission is headed by the Chief Monitor, Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan of Turkey. He was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter on 2 April 2014.

How does the Mission work?

The key principles are impartiality and transparency.

Each team consists of a team leader and nine monitoring officers. The team is divided into five pairs and work on a shift basis to ensure cover on the ground 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Mission works in co-operation with the OSCE's specialist institutions and international organizations such as the UN and the Council of Europe.

Where does the Mission work?

The Mission's Head Office is in Kyiv. The monitors have been initially deployed in teams of ten to Kherson, Odessa, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Chernivtsi, Luhansk.

The mandate of the Mission covers the entire territory of Ukraine. Any change in deployment shall be subject to a decision of the Permanent Council.

How long will the Mission last?

The Mission will be deployed for six months starting from 21 March 2014, with the possibility of an extension if necessary. Any extension to the Mission's mandate will be decided by the OSCE's primary decision-making body, the Permanent Council, if requested by Ukraine.

Who do the monitors report to?

The Chief Monitor is to regularly report through the Chairmanship of the OSCE to the OSCE's 57 participating States at the organization's primary decision-making body, the Permanent Council.

Who provides security for the monitors?

The Chief Monitor is responsible for ensuring that sufficient provisions are in place to safeguard the security and safety of mission members. He works closely with the national, regional and local authorities, taking into account to ensure agreement on freedom of movement of Mission members and takes into account the advice provided by the Mission's Security Officer.

The Mission members are unarmed civilians but they are provided with personal protective equipment, radio and satellite communication devices, and where necessary, armoured vehicles.

A system of security focal points and contingency plans has been established to ensure the security and safety of all mission staff.

Mission members are to report to the Chief Monitor on any restrictions to the freedom of movement or other impediments to fulfilment of the mission's mandate.

Does this Monitoring Mission include military people in uniform?

No. Visits by uniformed military personnel from OSCE participating States to Ukraine are different from the OSCE Monitoring Mission.

The team of military experts from OSCE participating States in south and east Ukraine from 5 to 20 March were deployed at the request of the authorities of Ukraine. The visit took place under Chapter III of the Vienna Document 2011, which allows for voluntary hosting of visits by an OSCE participating State to dispel concerns about unusual military activities.

At the moment, another group of eight unarmed military experts in uniform is on the ground in Ukraine. From 13 April, this team will be led by the Netherlands. They work under the invitation of Ukraine. The experts are on the ground under the Chapter III of the Vienna Document on risk reduction. They look at military aspects of the security situation on the ground.

Will the monitors observe the early presidential elections in May?

No. The Monitoring Mission will not conduct any election observation activities.

An Election Observation Mission from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is already in Ukraine to observe the preparations and campaign ahead of the 25 May 2014 early presidential election. The Election Observation Mission has been sent to Ukraine following an invitation from Ukraine's authorities. For election day, ODIHR expects to be joined by a mission from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as well as delegations from other parliamentary institutions.

ODIHR is the specialized institution of the OSCE dealing with elections, human rights and democratization, and observes elections across the OSCE's participating States for their conformity with OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections, as well as with national legislation.

Neither this Mission nor any other OSCE mission observed the so-called referendum in Crimea held on 16 March 2014.

I am a journalist. How do I get in touch with the OSCE Monitoring Mission to get an interview / comment from the monitors?

The mission will have a media officer / assistant who will work in the headquarters. Contact details will be communicated later. At the moment, you can send requests to press@osce.org.

The monitors will not be able to comment to the media on their assessment of the political, social or security situation in the country.