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**ACTIVITIES  
OF OSCE SPECIAL MISSIONS  
IN UKRAINE**

*The article is devoted to the analysis of the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Ukraine with an emphasis on two periods: 1994–1999 (2002) and 2014–2022. The article emphasizes the impact of OSCE special missions in Ukraine on security, stability and conflict resolution, as well as analyzes the 1994 mission in Crimea, which was aimed at monitoring the observance of human rights, supporting democratic reforms, establishing dialogue and cooperation between the conflicting parties. Despite some achievements, unresolved issues remain, and the human rights situation has worsened since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. At the same time, the article talks about the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, which monitors the armed ceasefire, protects human rights and provides support for democratic reforms in Ukraine since 2014.*

**Key words:** *OSCE, Ukraine, special missions, security, conflict resolution, monitoring mission, Russia.*

**Introduction:** The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is one of the largest international organizations dedicated to ensuring peace and security in Europe. The OSCE was established in 1994, on the basis of an act adopted in Paris, with the aim of ensuring dialogue and cooperation between member states and developing joint measures to ensure peace and security in the region. It is one of the largest organizations in the world, with representatives of 57 member states

from Europe, North America and Asia. Ukraine has been a member of the OSCE since 1992. Ukraine is one of the 57 OSCE participating states. The organization assists Ukraine in implementing its obligations under international treaties governing security and stability in the region. In addition, Ukraine is the host of many OSCE missions that monitor the country's territory to ensure peace and security. This article is highly relevant as it focuses on the activities and effectiveness of the OSCE special missions in Ukraine, particularly the analysis of the OSCE special mission in Ukraine from 1994 to 1999 (2002) and the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) from 2014 to 2022 provides valuable insights into the organization's efforts to address the conflict in the region and ensure peace and security. By examining the activities, effectiveness, and challenges faced by these missions, it can give a deeper understanding of their impact and relevance in the context of ongoing war in Ukraine. Also, it provides an opportunity to evaluate their role in monitoring compliance with ceasefires, documenting human rights abuses, and facilitating dialogue between conflicting parties. By examining their achievements and limitations, it is easier to identify areas for further improvement.

**The hypothesis of the article** is that the activities of the OSCE special missions in Ukraine have significant potential to ensure security and contribute to the peaceful settlement of the conflict, but their success depends on the organization's ability to effectively coordinate with the Ukrainian authorities, as well as with other international organizations and partners. Also, the success of the OSCE's activities in Ukraine depends on the organization's ability to adapt to changing conditions and challenges, in particular, to new forms and methods of Russian aggression. However, it may not always be effective, depending on the specific situation and the level of support from member states.

**Sources.** The activities of OSCE special missions in Ukraine and its objectives and achievements are analyzed in the works of the

following authors: A. Berger and N. Pozdnyakova [1], I. Lossovsky [2], R. Oberschmidt [5; 6], and A. Umland, A. Härtel, and A. Pisarenko [10], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine [4], and OSCE articles [7; 8]. For instance, Oberschmidt offers a comprehensive examination of the OSCE Mission to Ukraine from 1994 to 1999, its mandate, effectiveness, and the impact it had on promoting peace, stability, and conflict resolution in Ukraine. No less important the article of Umland and his colleagues, which provided a detailed analysis of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) of the OSCE in the Donbas region of Ukraine during the period from 2014 to 2019. Also, this article added valuable insights into the specific context of the Donbas region and contributed to a nuanced understanding of the OSCE's role in the Ukrainian conflict-solving process.

**The aim of this article** is to analyze the activities and effectiveness of the OSCE special missions in Ukraine from 1994 to 1999 (2002) and the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) from 2014 to 2022 in order to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the mission's relevance and the challenges it faces in the context of conflict resolution and security in Ukraine. The main objectives of this article are to analyze what tasks were set within the framework of special missions, and what results were obtained. The next task is to analyze the OSCE's activities in Ukraine since 2014 and assess the OSCE's impact on security in eastern Ukraine and support for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. This can help determine the effectiveness of the organization's work in conflict resolution and its ability to ensure peace and security in Europe.

**Main material.** Over the past two decades, the OSCE's activities in Ukraine have been particularly important considering the dramatic changes in the political and security situation in the country. In particular, the OSCE has played an important role in monitoring and upholding international standards during elections and reforms, as

well as in conflict resolution and facilitating dialogue between different parties. Particular attention has been paid to the OSCE's activities in Ukraine since the outbreak of the conflict in the east of the country in 2014. The issue raises the question of the organization's effectiveness, considering that since 2014 Ukraine has been subjected to aggression by Russia, which has led to the largest security crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold War. This has led to new challenges for the OSCE's activities in Ukraine, in particular, ensuring security in the east of the country and supporting the peaceful settlement of the conflict and security in Europe.

The activities of the OSCE special missions to Ukraine from 1994 to 1999 (mandate until 2002) and 2014 to 2022 contributed to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region through observation, reporting and mediation in conflicts. One example of such a special OSCE mission to Ukraine is the 1994 Special Mission.

The OSCE Mission to Ukraine in 1994, which focused on stabilizing the situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (hereinafter referred to as the ARC), was established to monitor the observance of human rights, including minority rights on the peninsula, to promote a peaceful settlement of the conflict by supporting democratic reforms, and to protect inter-ethnic harmony and long-term stability in the region. The main task of the mission was to support dialogue and establish cooperation between all parties to the conflict. The most difficult tasks of the OSCE in Ukraine in 1994 were the organization and management of the mission, as it was necessary to cooperate with all parties to the conflict and ensure its security. For this purpose, a special mission called the Central Headquarters was established to coordinate the work of all mission components and to liaise with all parties to the conflict.

The main components of the mission were: 1. Field teams - they provided security and facilitated dialogue between the parties to the conflict on the ground; 2. Naval observation;

This mission was one of the most important in the work of the OSCE and was of great importance to the international community. The mandate of the OSCE Mission to Ukraine was established by a decision of the OSCE Security Council and supported by UN Security Council Resolution 853, which stated that the mission should monitor compliance with the commitments arising from the OSCE Charter, in particular in the areas of economic and social development, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The OSCE mission was also supposed to study the situation in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The mission also acted as a diplomat and performed a number of other tasks, including building trust and cooperation between different ethnic groups [2; 5].

The OSCE Mission to Ukraine was headed by Flavio Cotti, a member of the Swiss Federal Council and the current chairman of the organization at the time. He was given great power in managing the mission, including in relations with the Ukrainian authorities. The mission included about 1,000 international observers, who were deployed in Ukraine in groups and managed on a location-by-location basis. The OSCE mission to Ukraine in 1994 on Crimea included OSCE member states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, and others. It should also be noted that the mission was organized into two levels - central and territorial. The central level was centered in Kyiv and was responsible for managing the mission as a whole, while the territorial level, namely the branch in Sevastopol, was responsible for field work. The Mission had a large number of employees who were responsible for various aspects of its activities, including troop movement observation, border control, monitoring of elections in Crimea, etc.

Before providing a general assessment of the OSCE Special Mission to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea 1994–1999 (2002), it is first necessary to outline the

main challenges the organization faced. One of the main challenges in Crimea was separatist tendencies among some groups of the local population. In particular, some Crimean Tatars demanded the return of land that had been confiscated from them in Soviet times. At the same time, among the Russian minority on the peninsula, support for the idea of Russia's annexation of Crimea was heard. Also, the issue of the naval base in Sevastopol and the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet that was stationed there was a hot topic. This issue was especially important for Ukraine, as the return of ownership of this military base was very important from an economic and strategic point of view. Also, during the mission, another challenge was the problem of the return and integration of Crimean Tatars who were deported from Crimea in 1944. According to an official source, the OSCE has made great efforts to support the return of Crimean Tatars to their homeland and their integration into Ukrainian society. At the same time, it is noted that this process was resisted by the Russian authorities, who opposed the return of Crimean Tatars.

Also, attention should be paid to the interests of internal and external actors in the situation with Crimea. Internal actors include, in particular, Crimean Tatars and the Ukrainian government. External actors are Russia and other OSCE member states.

The main steps taken by the OSCE with regard to the situation in Crimea are addressing the problems related to human rights and security on the peninsula, including monitoring the situation in Crimea, dialogue with the parties to the conflict, and engaging the public in the process of problem solving.

According to the official OSCE report, the mission's main achievements include significant progress in resolving differences between Kyiv and Simferopol, in particular, over the Crimean Constitution. The separatist tendencies that emerged in Crimea at that time were also eliminated. It also raised awareness of human rights on the peninsula. The mission succeeded in ensuring respect for the rights of

minorities and economic stability of the region [6].

Since the establishment of the mission, the internal political situation in the ARC has improved significantly. The constitutional process governing the Crimean Autonomy has become constructive. Also, the issues of economic development of the ARC, repatriation of deportees and settlement on the peninsula have come to the fore. It should also be noted that the Government of Ukraine was actively engaged in resolving issues of a purely internal nature. The main problems and obstacles encountered by the mission members were the lack of access to information and limited observation opportunities. In addition, there were problems with the organization of contacts with local authorities and other representatives of the public [6].

Unfortunately, it cannot be claimed that the 1994 OSCE mission to Ukraine in Crimea succeeded in fully ensuring respect for human rights and economic stability in the region. Many of the problems faced by the mission members remained unresolved, and the human rights situation on the peninsula remained under threat. In addition, in 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, and the human rights situation on the peninsula deteriorated significantly. Incidents of human rights violations began to occur again on the peninsula, and economic stability was also threatened.

Thus, it can be said that the 1994 OSCE mission to Ukraine on Crimea was an important step in ensuring respect for human rights and economic stability in the region. However, many of the problems remained unresolved, and the human rights situation on the peninsula remained under threat after Russia's annexation of Crimea. Thus, the OSCE Special Mission to Ukraine from 1994 to 1999 (2002) had both successful and unsuccessful moments. However, in general, its creation and operation are considered an important step in ensuring peace and stability in Ukraine and the region as a whole.

Regarding the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine from 2014 to 2022, it should be noted that it is an important mechanism for ensuring international security and stability in the region and supports the development of democracy and human rights in Ukraine. To substantiate this thesis, it can be seen that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine is one of the key mechanisms of international cooperation to ensure peace and stability in the region. The Mission has been operating in Ukraine since 2014 and has focused on monitoring the armed ceasefire, protecting human rights and supporting democratic reforms.

The Mission has focused on monitoring respect for human rights in the region, including the rights of the local population, refugees and IDPs, as well as free press and freedom of expression. In its work, the mission cooperates with the Ukrainian government and other international organizations to ensure the effective implementation of its tasks. According to the head of the mission, engaging in joint projects and initiatives with the local population helps to build trust in the mission and ensure greater support for its work. From Russia's annexation of Crimea to the beginning of the armed aggression of the Russian authorities in eastern Ukraine in 2014, the OSCE has chosen the role of mediator, working to bring the parties to a common solution and offering diplomatic methods and all possible tools to resolve the conflict. Moreover, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has provided its resources for discussion and monitoring of the situation to stop the Russian aggression [1].

Based on this, due to the events related to the invasion of Crimea by Russian troops and the subsequent change of power on the peninsula, the Ukrainian authorities requested the OSCE to send a mission of military experts to act as representatives of the OSCE participating states. This issue was discussed at a joint meeting of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Cooperation in Vienna, and following the discussion, a decision was

made to send unarmed military personnel from the OSCE countries. Such a mechanism of cooperation with the organization was made possible in accordance with the provisions of Chapter III of the Vienna Document 2011, which allows for voluntary visits to address concerns about unusual military activities. It should also be noted that the Vienna Document is one of the main confidence-building measures developed by the OSCE. This document enshrines the need for the exchange of information between the member states of the organization regarding their military forces, equipment, and defense plans [4].

An important part of shaping the organization's position on the events in Ukraine was the statements and official appeals of representatives at OSCE meetings. In particular, the annexation of Crimea and Russia's support for the self-proclaimed republics in eastern Ukraine violated the central principles of OSCE documents, calling into question everything the organization stood for. Moreover, considering the speeches and official letters from representatives of the OSCE member states to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office expressing support for Ukraine and recognizing Russia as an aggressor, they led to statements on behalf of the current Chairperson-in-Office and Secretary General for 2014. Thus, according to the official data posted on the website of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Chairman of the Organization, Didier Burkhalter, stated that the referendum in Crimea was illegal. He commented on the actions of the Russian Federation as a violation of its core OSCE commitments and incompatibility with international law. These unilateral actions also contradict the Helsinki Final Act, which enshrines the territorial integrity of states and non-interference in the internal affairs of foreign states, according to Burkhalter (2014). At the end of the address, the OSCE chairman reiterated his readiness to engage in a dialogue with all parties, which could be

carried out in the form of a Contact Group to consider possible ways out of the situation. He also called on all participating States to support the adoption of a prompt decision with the subsequent deployment of the OSCE Monitoring Mission to Ukraine [7].

Due to the first unsuccessful implementation of the special mission in Crimea, Russia's continued disregard for international rights and statements by state representatives, the Ukrainian leadership asked the OSCE to urgently send a new special monitoring mission. Thus, with the consent of 57 OSCE participating states, it was decided to send unarmed representatives from the organization's countries to Ukraine to collect data on the situation on the ground and to monitor the escalation of actions in the region. The SMM is the first long-term field operation on both sides of an active conflict and an international monitoring mission permanently deployed on the territory of Ukraine [9].

The main feature and significance of the mission lies in the specifics of its work, as it is a continuous monitoring of the situation and, as a result, the presentation of objective facts in regular reports that are available to anyone who wants to get acquainted with the latest developments. This specificity of the organization of the mission's work directly demonstrates to the international community the real state of affairs. Moreover, by facilitating dialogue on the ground, the mission interacts with all levels of government, as well as with civil society, ethnic and religious groups and local communities, which helps to analyze the situation at different levels.

The role of the mission deployed in Ukraine is enormous, as it was realized through the decision of the organization's members, which shows their interest in returning stability and restoring the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Moreover, the information reported provided a true picture of events for the parties working to resolve the conflict. Nevertheless, there were some minor shortcomings that hindered the OSCE's effective contribution to the conflict resolution. For example, the right of Russia, as a

member of the organization, to reject certain decisions. Also, the Special Monitoring Mission consists entirely of civilians who only monitor the conflict but cannot intervene in it. According to a Ukrainian observer, the SMM's role in de-escalating the conflict is useful, albeit limited. It should be remembered that the mission is not a peacekeeping mission and its mandate does not allow its members to directly provide military assistance to one of the parties, as it is an intermediary in this situation [10].

An important role in restoring stability and control over the maintenance of the "silence" regime was played by the signing of an international mandate under which OSCE representatives could exercise their powers in the border areas of both sides of the conflict. This includes the deployment of an observer mission on the Ukrainian-Russian border, at two Russian checkpoints, Gukovo and Donetsk, aimed at maintaining control over the interstate border. The group of representatives is a separate initiative of the Normandy Four states, separate from the special monitoring mission. The observers are called upon to help reduce tensions and strengthen stability and security. As in the case of the SMM, the observers' reports will help all participating states to make informed decisions to reduce tensions [10].

In 2015, Ukraine continued active cooperation with the OSCE institutions to implement a comprehensive approach to security. An indicator of the active work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, in particular, the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna is the extension of the mandate of the OSCE observer mission until 2017, despite the attempts of the Russian Rederation Mission to narrow the mandate of the mission.

Bearing in mind that the OSCE cares not only about security in the region and works to prevent conflicts and crises, the organization also aims to strengthen the democratic foundations of its members and provides its resources to address problems

related to violations of the rights of national minorities, media freedom, reforms and elections. For example, an OSCE project coordinator has been working in Ukraine since the beginning of the Russian occupation of Crimea, emphasizing the violation of freedom of speech of journalists from the peninsula, making it clear to the whole world that Russia's actions are illegal. In addition, field teams composed of representatives from OSCE member states are officially operating throughout Ukraine to monitor changes in the situation at the local level and to ensure that the Special Monitoring Mission can collect information more efficiently and effectively [8].

**Conclusion.** According to the analysis, it can be concluded that the hypothesis about the potential of the OSCE activities in Ukraine to ensure security and promote a peaceful settlement of the conflict is true. However, its success depends on a number of factors, such as effective coordination with the Ukrainian authorities and other international organizations and partners, the ability to adapt to changing conditions and challenges, and the level of support from member states. Thus, in order to maximize the effectiveness of the OSCE special missions in Ukraine, it is necessary to ensure effective coordination with the Ukrainian authorities and other international organizations, improve methods and approaches to adapt to changing conditions and challenges, and ensure a sufficient level of support from OSCE member states. This is the only way to maximize the success of the OSCE's activities in Ukraine and make a significant contribution to peace and security in the region.

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### **ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ СПЕЦІАЛЬНИХ МІСІЙ ОБСЄ В УКРАЇНІ**

*Статтю присвячено аналізу діяльності Організації з безпеки та співробітництва в Європі (ОБСЄ) в Україні з акцентом на два періоди: 1994–1999 (2002) та 2014–2022 роки. У статті підкреслюється вплив спеціальних місій ОБСЄ в Україні на безпеку, стабільність і вирішення конфліктів, а також аналізується місія 1994 року в Криму, яка мала на меті моніторинг дотримання прав людини, підтримку демократичних реформ, налагодження діалогу та співпраці між конфліктуючими сторонами. Незважаючи на певні досягнення, залишилися невирішені проблеми, а ситуація з правами людини погіршилася після анексії Росією Криму в 2014 році. Водночас у статті йдеться про Спеціальну моніторингову місію ОБСЄ в Україні, яка спостерігає за збройним припиненням вогню, захищає права людини та надає підтримку проведенню демократичних реформ в Україні з 2014 року.*

**Ключові слова:** ОБСЄ, Україна, спеціальні місії, безпека, вирішення конфлікту, моніторингова місія, Росія.

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