The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

OSCE Extends Ukraine Mission One Year

March 12, 2015

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will extend its observer mission to Ukraine for one year, until March 2016, and may double its size to 1,000 observers, a spokeswoman said Thursday.

Ukraine's military said Tuesday pro-Russian rebels were amassing heavy weapons in depots around separatist-held Donetsk city despite last month's cease-fire deal, which calls for the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the front line.

The OSCE said then that it could not confirm the withdrawal of weapons by either side, because it had not been given access to all locations where weapons might be stored.

The OSCE monitoring mission to Ukraine was first deployed a year ago following a request from Ukraine. It delivers public reports on fighting between pro-Russian groups and Ukrainians loyal to Kiev as well as on movements on border crossings between Russia and Ukraine.

The OSCE currently has around 470 civilian monitors on the ground in Ukraine, the spokeswoman said.

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https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/03/12/osce-extends-ukraine-mission-one-year-a44696