

Russia to Block Renewal of OSCE's Ukraine Mission

By [AFP](#)

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OSCE

Russia will by Thursday midnight block the renewal of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) permanent mission in Ukraine, ending a 23-year presence in the war-torn country, say diplomatic sources.

Russia "has the power to block the mandate at the end of June and it said it was going to do so," Danish ambassador Henrik Villadsen, the mission's project coordinator since 2018, told AFP.

He was confirming an earlier statement from the Polish rotating chairmanship of the institution, which said: "Unfortunately it formally ends in seven days due to the Russian veto."

The mission of the OSCE helps Ukraine bring its legislation, institutions and practices into

line with democratic standards.

It employs 110 people, mostly Ukrainians, on about 40 projects. Their work includes improving water quality, de-mining work, fighting human trafficking, corruption and domestic violence, said Villadsen.

"The OSCE is an incubator developing practices that do not yet exist," said Villadsen, who had an annual budget of 3.6 million euros for the projects.

"From 2010, for example, we worked to ensure that Ukraine joined international standards," in terms of mine clearance.

The OSCE also supported the country in the digitization of its electoral lists to create a unified register to avoid fraud.

Russia has already blocked the extension of the OSCE monitoring mission in Ukraine that since 2014 had been tracking the conflict between the government and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

All OSCE decisions are adopted by consensus.

The Vienna-based organization was founded in 1975 — at the height of the Cold War — to foster relations between the Western and Eastern blocs.

It currently has 57 member states, including NATO countries and allies of Moscow.

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