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**STATEMENT BY  
A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE  
1395th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 October 2022

**In response to the report by the Director of the  
OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Matteo Mecacci**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Director,

The Office's activities over the past six months have been nothing but deeply disappointing. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) – whether technically, organizationally or substantively – has “played a cameo role” in practically all the anti-Russian initiatives of the Western alliance countries, above all in the context of the Russian special military operation in Ukraine.

Such conduct is categorically unacceptable for an OSCE executive structure, the mandate of which was adopted not by a small group of countries but by all the participating States of the Organization. One gets the impression, Director, that you are drawing your ideological inspiration from the Polish OSCE Chairmanship, well known for its gross violations of the Rules of Procedure and established practices, and for its fiercely anti-Russian attitudes. Another hallmark of the authorities in Warsaw is the public propagation of non-consensus, highly confrontational approaches in violation of the mandate of an “honest broker” and notwithstanding the need to take into account the opinions of all participating States. Obviously, this is hardly an example to be emulated.

However, the fact that your report is replete with numerous positive assessments of the Chairmanship's activities suggests that you are not too bothered by this. We, on the other hand, find these assessments surprising, to put it mildly. Everything that the Polish authorities have managed to achieve in the human dimension is encapsulated in the word failure. The three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings held jointly with the ODIHR will undoubtedly go down in the annals of the OSCE as worthy of notoriety.

The recent Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, described by you as “a breath of [fresh] air for the [entire] OSCE human rights community”, will not be an exception either. Everyone knows our opinion of that ersatz event, so we will not repeat ourselves on that score. According to the information you yourself provided, by no means all OSCE participating States attended the event. This shortcoming was more than compensated for by the presence of hundreds of civil society activists, some of whom are recognized by various countries as terrorists or extremists. This is the latest manifestation of double standards. Everyone is

aware of the scandalous incident in May of this year when, at the instigation of the Polish Chairmanship, respected Russian non-governmental organizations were denied admission to an OSCE-sponsored human dimension event on spurious pretexts. The same is true for civil society activists from South Ossetia, who have insurmountable obstacles artificially put in their way to prevent them from travelling to Warsaw. At the same time, the “right” persons – “right” as determined opportunistically – encounter no restrictions whatsoever. It appears that the ODIHR and the Polish Chairmanship are adhering to the principle that, in theory, all are equal, but some are nevertheless more equal than others.

All this reaffirms the need to relocate the OSCE’s human dimension events and the ODIHR headquarters outside Poland.

Director,

Your assessments of the Russian special military operation are certainly a case in point to illustrate the notorious synergy feeding on anti-Russian attitudes that we mentioned earlier. One has only to consider your joint public statements with other functionaries and executive structures about the referendums in the Luhansk and Donetsk People’s Republics and the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. We believe that comments of that kind are more appropriate for speeches delivered in parliament somewhere. The head of an OSCE executive structure, however, should be guided by the positions agreed upon by all participating States. Nor should the head of an OSCE executive structure engage in the preparation and distribution of odious reports under biased extrabudgetary projects financed by a certain group of States in the hope of achieving the results they are after. The July review that you mentioned, prepared through a certain “Ukraine Monitoring Initiative”, does not stand up to any criticism from a substantive point of view. Moreover, it once again confirms the absence of any intentions on the part of the Office – obviously in keeping with the directives advanced by you – even just to try to approach the existing realities in an objective manner.

There is all the more reason for such an approach as there are plenty of causes for concern. The rise of neo-Nazism and statelessness, social and economic rights, gross violations by Western alliance countries of the Russian and Russian-speaking population’s rights to, for example, freedom of movement and human contacts, the rights of children, the rights of migrants and refugees, and non-discrimination against Christians, notably in the context of implementing the tasking from the 2014 OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Basel, remain without due attention from the ODIHR.

Mr. Chairperson,

Election monitoring continues to occupy an important place in the Office’s work. Unfortunately, this sphere of activities remains far from perfect, despite the concerns expressed by Russia and a number of other countries. We have repeatedly pointed to the persisting imbalance in the geographical deployment and size of ODIHR observation missions and the arbitrary and unfair division of OSCE participating States into “mature” and “immature” democracies. Likewise we have pointed to the lack of consistency in the election observation methodology, which a number of countries and the Office itself are unjustifiably trying to make out to be a gold standard. Such worrying trends have also continued into 2022. We hope, Mr. Mecacci, that you took note of our substantive statement at the Permanent Council on 15 September.

We should like once again to recall the provisions of Brussels Ministerial Council Decision No. 19/06 on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. It is stated there that the ODIHR should “ensure as wide as possible geographical coverage in [its] election activities”. The same document also refers to the need to “strengthen the observation methodology”. We believe that the only way to implement these provisions and, at the same time, to rectify the unsatisfactory state of affairs is to work out rules for election observation agreed upon by all participating States.

A professional discussion could contribute to this process. We welcome the intention to hold the annual seminar on election observation on 25 October in the Hofburg. We hope that the event will take place in the traditional depoliticized manner, despite attempts by the executive structure in question to “Ukrainize” the electoral sphere and introduce highly confrontational subjects into official publications on elections.

In concluding, we note that the ODIHR’s budget proposal for 2023, which provides for a cost increase of more than 1.25 million euros, or 7.6 per cent, will not remain without an appropriate assessment and response on our part. The proposal is ambitious and poorly justified as always – not only from the point of view of actual resource requirements, but also in terms of its overinflated disproportion compared to the Office’s political status and mandate. We will provide detailed comments on this issue at the expert level tomorrow.

Thank you for your attention.