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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1306th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

18 March 2021

**On the seventh anniversary of the reunification of Crimea with Russia**

Madam Chairperson,

Today marks the seventh anniversary of a landmark historical event. The Treaty on the Reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia was signed on 18 March 2014. This was a just and long-awaited decision for the residents of Crimea and for our entire country.

In the years that have passed since Crimea's reunification with Russia, the Republic's economy has been growing rapidly. The macroeconomic indicators for 2020 show that it is sufficiently resilient to external challenges. Turnover from commercial activities in 2020 rose by 11 per cent to more than 706 billion roubles.

Between January and September 2020, the Republic of Crimea's exports amounted to some 26.2 million dollars – an increase of 8.6 per cent compared to the same period last year. Interestingly, the largest trading partner in Crimea's exports in the first nine months of 2020 was Ukraine (43 per cent), as well as Belarus (20.7 per cent), China (13.2 per cent), India (10 per cent), Kazakhstan (6.7 per cent), Uzbekistan (1.8 per cent), Kyrgyzstan (1.2 per cent) and Armenia (0.9 per cent).

According to the latest data, more than 3,400 business entities established by legal and natural persons from 60 countries are registered in Crimea. These are mainly companies and individuals from Ukraine and Cyprus, and also Belarus, Armenia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Germany, the United Kingdom, Israel, the United States of America, the Virgin Islands and the Seychelles, who invest in tourism, hospitality and agriculture. A high-profile business delegation from China visited Crimea last week to explore investment opportunities on the peninsula.

The federal special-purpose programme for the socio-economic development of the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol until 2025 is being implemented (total funding: 1 trillion 374 billion roubles). It provides for the construction of 978 engineering, transport, social, tourist and recreational, industrial, energy and telecommunication infrastructure facilities – 77 of which are aimed at ensuring inter-ethnic harmony. Such large-scale projects as the Kerch Strait crossing (the Crimean Bridge), the

Tavrida federal motorway (Kerch-Feodosia-Belogorsk-Simferopol-Bakhchysarai-Sevastopol) and the renovation of the Artek international children's centre are being carried out under the programme.

The Simferopol airport terminal complex has been reconstructed. It currently receives between 16 and 25 flights a day from 17 airlines.

Measures are being taken to reliably supply the peninsula with water. Water intake and supply facilities are now under construction in Crimea for the eastern part of the region, and a number of important infrastructure facilities are scheduled for completion this year. Two desalination plants are scheduled to be launched in 2022, with the design process already under way.

As you know, water has become a pressing issue in the Republic after Ukraine unilaterally cut off the peninsula's water supply through the North Crimean Canal in 2014 in violation of its international obligations. We recall that this canal accounted for about 85 per cent of the region's water supply. This is a matter of an inhumane water blockade of the people of Crimea as punishment for their democratic choice. Recently, in February, a member of the German Bundestag, Waldemar Herdt, called the stoppage of the fresh water supply "a medieval siege method". He is particularly concerned that the blockade was imposed by Ukraine, "where Germany is investing millions of euros in the development of democratic processes". Incidentally, Herdt also believes that "it is pure political speculation to consider Crimea an annexed and occupied territory. All the procedures of international law were observed during the Crimean referendum. The referendum was perfectly legitimate." We urge everyone to take heed of this reasonable viewpoint, especially as it is shared by a growing number of members of the international community. The increasing support for Russian Crimea has also been confirmed by the Arria-formula discussion on the region, which took place at the United Nations Security Council on 17 March.

The tourism industry is developing well. In 2020, the peninsula received 6.3 million visitors. It was also visited by some 160,000 foreign citizens. These included official delegations of 90 parliamentarians, journalists and public figures from France, Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, among others. Other countries' interest in the Republic is growing steadily. In February this year, the peninsula's resort and tourism potential was presented in Serbia. During their aforementioned visit to Crimea, the business people from China discussed plans for co-operation in various fields, including tourism. They estimate that the potential volume of tourist traffic from China could be as much as 2 million people per year.

Equal rights and conditions for the preservation and development of the national language, culture, identity, and freedom of conscience and religion have been established in Crimea.

Inter-ethnic and interfaith harmony is a priority. The success of this policy has been confirmed by data from the Ismail Gasprinsky Media Centre. According to a recent social survey in 2020, 96 per cent of Crimeans assessed inter-ethnic and interfaith relations as friendly. The interfaith council "Peace is the Gift of God" operates under the auspices of the Head of the Republic of Crimea. There are municipal councils on inter-ethnic and interfaith relations in all 25 administrative and territorial units of the region with a broad membership.

As part of the implementation of the State programme entitled "The Republic of Crimea – a territory of inter-ethnic harmony", the State Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations of the Republic of Crimea and the House of Friendship of the Peoples held 72 ethnocultural events in 2020. Of these events, 47 were devoted to the ethnocultural and spiritual development of the peoples of Crimea, 12 to the promotion of good-neighbourly relations in society and combating xenophobia, 9 to facilitating the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of Crimean Karaites and Krymchaks, and 4 to religious education. The meetings were attended by more than 85,000 people, including representatives of autonomous ethnic and

cultural organizations and public associations of the Republic (85,300 people in total, of whom 61,156 attended via video link and 24,144 attended in person).

In addition, grant support worth a total of 9 million roubles was provided to 18 non-profit organizations for the implementation of projects of social significance. Among the most successful projects has been the one helping to establish an ethnographic centre for Armenian culture in the village of Donskoye in the Simferopol district. The facility's construction has now been completed, and its opening is scheduled in the near future.

I will now say a few words about the national media. The State Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations provides support to 12 native-language publications, in particular, the Ukrainian-language information portal "Pereyaslavskaya Rada 2.0". The newspaper *Krymskiy Visnyk* is also published in Ukrainian, and from June 2020, the quarterly cultural and educational magazine *Krym sodayni* will also be published in Ukrainian.

The Millet television channel and Vatan Sedasi radio station continue to operate successfully as part of the Public Crimean Tatar Television and Radio Company. Significant work is being carried out by the Ismail Gasprinsky Media Centre, whose activities are aimed at supporting newspapers and magazines in native languages. I will give a few examples: the magazine *Yildiz* and the newspaper *Yani dyunya* (published in Crimean Tatar), and the bilingual newspapers *Hoffnung* (published in German and Russian), *Tavrika* (published in Greek and Russian), *Izvor* (published in Bulgarian and Russian) and *Golub Masisa* (published in Armenian and Russian).

It is traditional for events dedicated to the birthdays of prominent figures, such as the Ukrainian poets Taras Shevchenko (born on 9 March 1814) and Lesya Ukrainka (born on 25 February 1871), to be widely celebrated. Throughout 2020, celebrations were held to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth on 25 October 1920 of Crimean Tatar Amet-khan Sultan, twice awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union and decorated test pilot of the USSR. In addition to various conferences and round tables, a monument to the hero was unveiled on the square of the same name in Simferopol.

Russian, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar are all State languages in the Republic of Crimea. There are various opportunities to study them at school and at institutions of higher education. The choice of the language of instruction and learning for students is made by the parents.

In short, the region is open and continues to develop in a comprehensive manner within the socio-economic and legal space of the Russian Federation. The Crimean people fully exercise their rights in accordance with the Constitution, as well as with Russia's international commitments, including those of the OSCE.

We should like to take this opportunity to reiterate our readiness to receive visits to Crimea by any international human rights missions, provided that such visits are within their mandates and in accordance with the procedures applicable to visits to the Russian Federation.

Thank you for your attention.