

Chairmanship: Sweden

1302nd PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. Date: Thursday, 11 February 2021 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.

Suspended: 12.55 p.m.

Resumed: 3 p.m.

Closed: 5.15 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson reminded the Permanent Council of the technical modalities for the conduct of meetings of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: PRESENTATIONS BY THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE SECURITY COMMITTEE; THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE; AND THE HUMAN DIMENSION COMMITTEE

Chairperson, Chairperson of the Security Committee (PC.DEL/203/21 OSCE+), Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee (PC.DEL/208/21 OSCE+), Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/167/21 OSCE+), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/210/21), Albania (PC.DEL/170/21 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/186/21 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/204/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/165/21), Holy See (PC.DEL/164/21/Rev.1 OSCE+), Georgia (PC.DEL/194/21 OSCE+), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/166/21 OSCE+), Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/168/21 OSCE+),

Armenia (PC.DEL/209/21), Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine (PC.DEL/182/21),
Uzbekistan

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/176/21), Canada (PC.DEL/178/21 OSCE+), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Moldova, in alignment) (PC.DEL/213/21), Switzerland (PC.DEL/205/21 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/201/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/169/21), United Kingdom
- (b) *Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202: Six years after:* Russian Federation (Annex 1), Ukraine, Germany (also on behalf of France) (Annex 2)
- (c) *The aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters:* Armenia (Annex 3)
- (d) *Violations of freedom of the media in the OSCE area:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/179/21) (PC.DEL/195/21), Ukraine (PC.DEL/185/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/180/21), Portugal-European Union, Latvia (Annex 4), United Kingdom
- (e) *Extension of the illegal detention of Zaza Gakheladze by the Russian occupation regime in the Tskhinvali Regions/South Ossetia, Georgia:* Georgia (PC.DEL/199/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/181/21), United Kingdom, Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/212/21), Canada (also on behalf of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) (PC.DEL/206/21 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/183/21), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/192/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/184/21 OSCE+)

Agenda item 3: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Conduct of OSCE meetings in view of the COVID-19 pandemic:* Chairperson
- (b) *Visit of the Chairperson-in-Office to Georgia and Moldova, to take place from 15 to 17 February 2021:* Chairperson
- (c) *First preparatory meeting for the 29th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on "Promoting comprehensive security, stability and sustainable*

development in the OSCE area through women's economic empowerment", to be held via video teleconference on 15 and 16 February 2021: Chairperson

- (d) *High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar, held on 9 and 10 February 2021: Chairperson*
- (e) *Meeting between the Chairperson-in-Office and the OSCE Secretary General in Stockholm on 8 February 2021: Chairperson*
- (f) *Meeting between the Chairperson-in-Office and representatives of Swedish civil society organizations on 12 February 2021: Chairperson*

Agenda item 4: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Update on the COVID-19 situation across the OSCE executive structures: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/22/21 OSCE+)*
- (b) *Visit of the Secretary General to Stockholm on 8 and 9 February 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/22/21 OSCE+)*
- (c) *Simulation workshop on transboundary river basin agreements, held via video teleconference from 3 to 5 February 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/22/21 OSCE+)*
- (d) *Briefing on efforts regarding gender-sensitive approaches in the fight against trafficking in human beings: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/22/21 OSCE+)*
- (e) *Update on a cross-dimensional initiative in the fight against transnational organized crime and corruption in South-Eastern Europe: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/22/21 OSCE+)*

Agenda item 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Final report by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on the presidential election in the United States of America, held on 3 November 2020: United States of America (PC.DEL/189/21) (PC.DEL/187/21), Norway, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/197/21), United Kingdom*
- (b) *Opening of a joint Turkish-Russian monitoring centre in line with the trilateral statement of 10 November 2020 signed by Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation: Azerbaijan (Annex 5), Turkey (Annex 6), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/200/21)*
- (c) *Parliamentary elections in Albania, to be held on 25 April 2021: Albania (Annex 7)*
- (d) *The All-Belarusian People's Assembly, being held on 11 and 12 February 2021: Belarus (PC.DEL/193/21 OSCE+), Norway (also on behalf*

of Canada) (PC.DEL/191/21), Portugal-European Union, United States of America (PC.DEL/190/21), United Kingdom

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 18 February 2021, at 10 a.m., via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1302
11 February 2021
Annex 1

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

1302nd Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1302, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Madam Chairperson,

Six years ago, at the height of the active phase of the armed confrontation in the east of Ukraine, a document was drawn up in Minsk that was aimed at putting an immediate stop to the violence and implementing effective steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive political settlement.

The Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements was the result of energetic diplomatic efforts supported by France, Germany and the Russian Federation, and it took into account the positions of the parties to the conflict, namely of the representatives of the Ukrainian leadership and of the leaders of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The then President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, insisted that this document setting out the parties' mutual obligations within the framework of the settlement process should without fail be signed by the leaders of the republics proclaimed by the people of Donbas. A few days later, on 17 February 2015, this compact action plan consisting of 13 paragraphs was unanimously endorsed by the United Nations Security Council in its resolution 2202, thereby becoming part of international law and subject to mandatory implementation.

All the provisions of the Package of Measures were meant to have been implemented by the end of 2015. Unfortunately, though, the overwhelming majority of its paragraphs are even today – six years on – very far from having been put into practice. In spite of this, all the participants in the settlement process and international co-mediators have repeatedly pointed to the absence of any alternatives to the Minsk agreements when it comes to achieving a peaceful, politico-diplomatic settlement of the crisis.

A fully consolidated consensus would appear to have emerged on that score among the OSCE participating States. Despite the differences in our understanding of the origins of the crisis in Ukraine, we are united by our realization of the need for practical implementation, at all costs, of the Package of Measures, which would pave the way for sustainable peace and a long-term, viable resolution of the crisis.

A key instrument in this implementation is the Minsk-based Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) together with its thematic working groups. Unfortunately, for a long time now the discussions within these have not been marked by serious momentum. Thus, the ongoing, highly complicated work on drawing up a road map for the implementation of the Package of Measures is hampered by the regularly voiced appeals by individual participants in that process calling for the Minsk agreements to be “adjusted” or “clarified” or even to be “rewritten” completely.

Attempts to artificially drag out the negotiation process are merely making a settlement a more distant prospect. Yet, the situation near the line of contact in Donbas remains challenging. The continued confrontation there cannot simply be reduced to dry statistics on the daily instances of shelling, of which the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has already counted more than 3,000 since the beginning of the year. Rather, it is reflected in the fate of specific people, who for seven years now have been waiting for peace, finally, to come to their land. For example, over the past two weeks alone, a number of civilian objects in the settlement of Syhnalne (Donetsk region) were damaged by shelling, as was – just a few days ago – a functioning school in the settlement of Zolote-5/Mykhailivka (Luhansk region).

We exhort all our colleagues to adopt an earnest attitude, free of any opportunism, towards the need for a speedy settlement of the crisis in Ukraine. We believe that, in the current circumstances, the OSCE under its Swedish Chairmanship is capable of playing a significant constructive role and giving fresh impetus to the implementation of the Package of Measures. A collective, general show of support for United Nations Security Council resolution 2202 is required.

In this respect, as the sixth anniversary of the agreement on, and endorsement of, the text of the Package of Measures draws near, we are submitting a proposal to the Chairmanship and all the participating States for the adoption of a brief but meaningful statement by the Permanent Council in support of the implementation of the aforementioned resolution.

We think that it is essential for such a statement – which should take into account the efforts undertaken in Ukraine by the TCG, the “Normandy format” countries and the SMM – to convey emphatic support for the Package of Measures as the basis for a peaceful settlement in Donbas. It is important to call for the full and swift implementation of its provisions in strict sequence and in their entirety, and also to reiterate appeals to the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the TCG, to the co-ordinators of the TCG’s working groups and to the SMM to engage in active efforts in the interests of implementing the Package of Measures.

We are convinced that such a message will help to prevent escalation of the conflict – something that would be fraught with unforeseeable consequences – and that it will serve as an additional motivation for bringing peace closer in the east of Ukraine.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you for your attention.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1302
11 February 2021
Annex 2

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

1302nd Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1302, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY (ALSO ON BEHALF OF FRANCE)**

Madam Chairperson,

In his statement, the esteemed colleague from the Russian Federation questioned the commitment of the colleagues in the OSCE Permanent Council to resolving the conflict in eastern Ukraine and called for a statement by the OSCE Permanent Council in support of the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2202.

On behalf of France and Germany, I should like to make the following comments on the statement by the representative of the Russian Federation.

The Minsk Package of Measures remains the only workable solution for the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Russia has signed the Minsk agreements. Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE are the only members of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) in accordance with the Minsk agreements.

Substantial progress on all of the provisions of the Minsk agreements is the prerequisite for holding local elections and thus allowing the international border throughout the entire conflict area to be placed back under the full control of the Ukrainian Government.

We therefore call on all sides to honour their commitments and fully implement the Minsk agreements and the conclusions of the Paris summit of December 2019.

Now to the implementation status of the Package of Measures six years after the signing of the Minsk agreements, as touched on by the esteemed colleague from the Russian Federation.

Since additional measures were agreed upon in the TCG in July of last year, the ceasefire has largely held. A number of prisoners were exchanged and reunited with their families, and detainees were released. Additional crossing points on the line of contact were established in Zolote and Shchastia, which should have opened on 10 November 2020.

However, in contrast to Ukraine, the Russia-backed separatists have to this day not opened these crossing points, even though this had been agreed long ago in the TCG. This is

a characteristic example of how the implementation of the Paris summit conclusions is being blocked at the political level.

Furthermore, we have seen negative trends over the past few weeks: the ceasefire violations have increased again, new trenches have been dug and the restrictions on access for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine continue.

As for the work of the TCG, the mandate of the latter is clear. It is, however, necessary that the parties to the Minsk agreements allow the TCG to discuss all the items on its agenda and reach an agreement on solutions to pressing issues such as mine clearance, the opening of additional crossing points on the line of contact, and disengagement areas.

In accordance with the Minsk agreements, Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE are members of the TCG. We therefore expressly call on the Russian Government to use its considerable influence on the Russia-backed separatists to ensure that the Minsk commitments are fully implemented.

This includes reopening all the existing crossing points along the line of contact, which the Russia-backed armed formations closed under the pretext of the COVID-19 pandemic, even though the international border between Russia and Ukraine in the non-government-controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions is crossed by thousands of people every day.

We also call on Russia to put a stop to its policy of issuing Russian passports in large numbers to Ukrainian citizens. This practice directly contradicts the spirit and the objectives of the Minsk agreements and violates international law.

Moving on to the role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM): the Mission plays an indispensable role in establishing the facts on the ground and reducing tensions by facilitating dialogue between the parties.

The SMM continues to be hindered in implementing its mandate in full measure. Its freedom of movement is restricted on a daily basis, especially on the other side of the line of contact, in the disengagement area of Petrivske and in areas adjacent to the non-government-controlled segments of the international border. SMM property is vandalized, including cameras and unmanned aerial vehicles. According to the latest SMM reports, the separatists were responsible for more than 94 per cent of all such incidents.

These obstructions impair the SMM's operational capability considerably. The restrictions imposed in connection with the pandemic have also, in effect, artificially divided the SMM into three separate entities.

We urgently call on Russia to bring its influence to bear so that the SMM can expand its infrastructure. This means the SMM being able to set up the new bases required in non-government-controlled areas and that the restrictions and attacks on the SMM's equipment stop.

Together with France, Germany is committed to continuing our joint endeavours within the Normandy format to achieve tangible progress and to improve the situation of the people most affected.

We call on the parties to fulfil in good faith the commitments under the Minsk agreements along with the Paris summit conclusions. We call on Ukraine to fulfil its political commitments. We call on Russia to participate more constructively in the Normandy format negotiations and to exercise its influence on the separatists in order that progress can be made in the TCG negotiations.

In closing, I should like to underscore the unwavering support of France and Germany for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



1302nd Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1302, Agenda item 2(c)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Madam Chairperson,

Three months have passed since the signing of the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020 on ceasefire and cessation of the hostilities unleashed by Azerbaijan with the direct involvement of Turkey and its terrorist affiliates, but the issue of the Armenian prisoners of war and other captives still remains unresolved. To date, Azerbaijan has continued to flout article 8 of the 9 November trilateral statement, which mandates the exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detainees. The Azerbaijani authorities are continuing to abuse and manipulate this purely humanitarian issue. Moreover, statements and speculations coming from Azerbaijan concerning Armenian prisoners of war and other captives give us legitimate and valid cause for concern that we face a hostage-taking type of situation, as does the intentional misrepresentation of some prisoners of war as terrorists.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan's complete disregard for and in some cases even open rejection of its obligations under international humanitarian law would adversely affect the effectiveness of those mechanisms and instruments. Such developments also make clear the need to adapt and strengthen the existing instruments with the aim of enhancing the efficacy of international humanitarian law.

Madam Chairperson,

The Azerbaijani authorities continue to manipulate the highly sensitive issue of prisoners of war and civilian captives for their narrow political goals. Notably, Azerbaijan believes that the prolonged incommunicado detention of Armenian prisoners of war can serve as an instrument for putting additional pressure on the Armenian authorities, forcing them to make concessions. Indeed, each and every agreement on the part of Azerbaijan to return Armenian captives has been followed by new conditions and bargaining.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan continues to conceal the real number of prisoners of war, denying the capture of dozens of Armenian servicemen and civilians. As of today, Azerbaijan has confirmed through a written communication to the International Committee of the Red Cross that it holds 57 captives, including five captives taken prisoner in December and 15 civilians, including women. However, according to our estimates the real number of captives far exceeds this figure. Given the reluctance of Azerbaijani side to co-operate on this

issue, we have particular concerns that the prisoners of war and captives may become victims of slavery and human trafficking.

On 9 February 2021, five more Armenian prisoners of war were repatriated to Armenia with the facilitation and assistance of the Russian peacekeepers. As became known later, the arrangement initially reached stipulated the return of 20 or more people. However, for some unknown reason, the Azerbaijani authorities decided to release only five. In violation of the “all for all” principle of exchange, Azerbaijan arbitrarily decides on the number of prisoners of war to be released, to better serve its aims and goals.

All these facts attest to Azerbaijan’s clear, complete and demonstrative disregard for its international commitments and its obligations under international humanitarian law.

Armenia condemns this pernicious practice of threats, blackmail and hostage-taking and deplores Azerbaijan’s attempts to instrumentalize this humanitarian issue and turn it into a bargaining tool.

Madam Chairperson,

Equally disturbing is Azerbaijan’s demonstrable lack of co-operation in the area of preservation of cultural heritage. As a result of Azerbaijan’s aggression against Artsakh, a significant part of the Armenian cultural and historical heritage remained in the territories of Nagorno-Karabakh occupied by Azerbaijan.

According to a report prepared by the Office of the Artsakh Human Rights Defender, at least 1,456 immovable monuments of Armenian history and culture have come under the control of Azerbaijan, including 161 monasteries and churches, 591 cross-stones (Armenian: khachkar), the archaeological excavation sites of Tigranakert, Azokh, Nor Karmiravan, Mirik and Keren, and numerous fortresses, castles, shrines and other monuments. In addition, eight State museums with 19,311 exhibits and a number of private museums have come under the control of Baku.

In an effort to eliminate completely every trace of the Artsakh Armenians’ existence in their homeland, Azerbaijan is consistently destroying cultural, historic and other monuments, not even sparing gravestones. Azerbaijani soldiers do not even shy away from posting photo and video footage of these criminal acts on online platforms that leaves no room at all for doubt that they are operating with total impunity.

In parallel, the State propaganda machine is even now continuing to spread fake and false information calculated to further entrench the already deep-rooted anti-Armenian hatred and xenophobia. One recent example is provided by photographs from the occupied city of Mekhakavan (Jabrail) allegedly showing desecrated Azerbaijani graves. However, the pre-war photographs show that in peacetime the graves were kept intact and preserved.

Along with destruction of the cultural and historical sites, the Azerbaijani authorities have embarked on falsifying the identity of and misappropriating the Armenian religious sites and monuments. In this context, we recall the comments of the press secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Armenia made in connection with statements of the Azerbaijani President during his meeting with the Director General of the Islamic World Organization for Education,

Science and Culture (ISESCO). The press secretary highlighted that “distortion of the identity of the Armenian heritage is an attempt at ‘cultural robbery’, which is also a gross violation of the relevant international legal documents.”

It is well known that the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities not only took all Islamic monuments and cemeteries under State protection, but also restored mosques at their own expense, whereas Azerbaijan has been pursuing a policy of destroying any Armenian traces on the territory of modern Azerbaijan. The most vivid example of that policy is the complete annihilation of Jugha Necropolis (Nakhijevan), the largest known Armenian cemetery anywhere in the world, and of its medieval khachkars (cross-stones) dating from the fifth to the early seventeenth centuries. In an article on this subject, the *Guardian* referred to the destruction of Jugha cemetery as a “monumental loss” and “the worst cultural genocide of the 21st century”. And this loss still resonates amongst Armenians in Armenia, Artsakh and around the world.

Undermining the efforts of the international community to preserve the cultural heritage of Artsakh, Azerbaijan continues to create obstacles to access to the region for international professional organizations, primarily UNESCO, accusing them of bias. Instead, for obvious reasons, Azerbaijan is trying to engage organizations whose modus operandi is based on religious solidarity and kinship.

Another issue that has surfaced is the denial to Armenians of access to religious sites, such as monasteries and churches, that came under the control of Azerbaijan as a result of recent aggression, despite assurances provided earlier and agreed special arrangements. Last Sunday, on 7 February, a group of Armenian pilgrims attempted to travel to the monastery complex of Dadivank. In accordance with preliminary arrangements, they were accompanied by Russian peacekeepers. For the information of colleagues, according to tradition, Dadivank was founded by St. Dadi, a disciple of Thaddeus the Apostle, who spread Christianity in Armenia, and is also the burial site of St. Dadi. Moreover, Dadivank is one of the masterpieces of Armenian medieval religious architecture. However, last Sunday, the Armenian pilgrims were denied entry to the monastery complex by the Azerbaijani armed forces. The group also included priests who were to serve in the monastery.

The preservation of the Armenian historical, cultural and religious monuments that have come under the control of Azerbaijan should be an important part of the peace process, given the numerous facts of systematic destruction of the Armenian cultural and religious heritage in the past. In this context, the leadership of Azerbaijan and the State propaganda machine must immediately put an end to the reprehensible policy and practice of appropriation and distortion of the identity of Armenian churches. The appropriation or distortion of the cultural values of the Armenian people does not contribute to regional peace.

Madam Chairperson,

The current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is the result of the flagrant violation by Azerbaijan of several core principles of the Helsinki Final Act, namely, refraining from the threat or use of force, peaceful settlement of disputes, and equal rights and self-determination of peoples, not to mention respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Consequently, there should be no illusion that the outcomes of the use of force, accompanied

by war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law, can ever become the basis for a negotiation process aimed at reaching a lasting and sustainable peace.

Lasting and durable peace in the region can only be achieved through a comprehensive resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which must include the resolution of the issue of the status of Artsakh based on the realization of the right to self-determination, ensuring the safe and dignified return of the recently displaced population to their homes, and preserving the cultural and religious heritage of the region.

Thank you.



1302nd Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1302, Agenda item 2(d)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF LATVIA**

Madam Chairperson,

Since my country has been mentioned, I would like to exercise my right of reply and respond to the statement of the representative of the Russian Federation.

On one thing the Russian delegation is right – none of those cases mentioned in its statement has anything to do with politics.

They have to do with laws: national, regional and international. Laws that are clear and applicable to everyone in the same way.

But disinformation is what is happening – once again – in the Permanent Council. And here are the facts.

Firstly, the Russian delegation mentioned the decision taken by the National Electronic Mass Media Council (NEPLP), that is, an institution independent of the Latvian government and parliament, to suspend the retransmission, broadcast and redistribution of the Rossiya RTR TV channel on the territory of Latvia for a full year commencing next Monday, 15 February.

Why? The decision was adopted because significant violations of the law had been identified within a longer period of time (i.e., not just a single violation) that amount to incitement to hatred, hostility, violence and military conflict. As the violations that form the basis of the decision take up 12 pages of the 25-page decision, I only wish to mention a few. On the TV channel Rossiya RTR:

- Russia was incited to invade Ukraine, which was called a terrorist State.
- It was suggested that Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya be dragged from Vilnius and hanged on the central square of Minsk for everyone to see.
- Russia was incited to add to its territory the Estonian city of Narva and the Latvian city of Jēkabpils because, it was claimed, only Russians live there anyway.

- There was also incitement to send Russian military planes to Berlin and Stockholm.
- There was incitement to re-establish borders as they were on 1 January 1990, that is, when the Soviet Union still existed.

And the list goes on.

None of the above is in accord with the values and founding principles of the OSCE.

All these positions and many more have been expressed in programmes of Rossiya RTR, even just within the last six months. Nor have they been expressed only by participants in the programmes but on many occasions by the anchors of the programmes.

To give just one example of what international law says about such messages, Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates that any propaganda for war and any advocacy of national, racial, religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

How the decision was made? The decision was made, after six months' review and investigation, on the basis of Latvia's commitments to international law, *inter alia*, Article 6 of the European Union's Audiovisual Media Services Directive. It was adopted in close co-operation with the institution overseeing the implementation of the directive – the European Commission. The procedure and the content of the decision is completely in line with Latvia's national law and applicable international law including that relating to media freedom. It is also based on case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice.

Thus, the decision has a solid legal grounding and has been carefully weighed and considered. As a result, it is both legitimate and proportionate.

The decision is subject to judicial review, that is to say, the owner of the channel can appeal against the decision in court.

Secondly, the delegation of the Russian Federation mentioned the case of the independent National Electronic Mass Media Council decision to not retransmit 16 channels in Latvia. This decision was adopted on account of the previous licences having expired and no application for renewal of the licences being submitted.

That is to say, since 1 February 2021, when the previous licenses expired, there has been no identifiable legal entity possessing the rights to retransmit those channels in Latvia. This is solely and uniquely an issue of licences not being renewed and no one having applied for their renewal as prescribed in law.

Madam Chairperson,

While the disinformation campaign continues under the very auspices of the OSCE, Latvia will remain at the forefront of the fight for media freedom, freedom of expression and the safety of journalists.

One of the facts demonstrating this is the place of Latvia in the World Press Freedom Index, in which Latvia ranks 22nd, while the participating State implying that media freedom is under attack in Latvia occupies the 149th place.

My assertion is furthermore corroborated by the fact that media and journalists from the Russian Federation have been moving their businesses to Latvia precisely for the sake of media freedom and safety of journalists, and not the other way around.

Thirdly, just some figures:

- Out of around four hundred TV programmes in Latvia, 50 are available in Latvian, more than two hundred are available in Russian, approximately two hundred have English versions, 21 are available in Ukrainian, two in Belarusian, and so on.
- All of the five most popular Internet media have Russian versions.
- There are 44 public and commercial radio programmes in Latvia, 17 of them in Russian.

On the subject of media freedom, freedom of expression and pluralism of views being ensured in Latvia, the facts and figures speak for themselves

Madam Chairperson,

When laws are respected and international law and principles are respected, societies prosper. In such societies there is no place for hatred, incitement to violence, incitement to armed conflict or hate speech on any basis. That would be contrary to OSCE principles and values, including those related to media freedom.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson, and kindly ask that my statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1302
11 February 2021
Annex 5

Original: ENGLISH

1302nd Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1302, Agenda item 5(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN**

Madam Chairperson,

We would like to inform the Permanent Council that on 30 January 2021 the joint Turkish-Russian monitoring centre has started its operation.

The joint centre was established in line with the 10 November trilateral statement signed by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia, and on the basis of the memorandum concluded between Turkish and Russian Ministers of Defence on 11 November 2020.

Located in the Aghdam district of Azerbaijan, the joint centre's premises consist of service, administrative and residential rooms, which are fully equipped for carrying out the functions that the centre has been assigned with. Security of the joint monitoring centre is provided by the servicemen of the armed forces of Azerbaijan. Staff of the joint Turkish-Russian centre is comprised of 60 Turkish and 60 Russian servicemen. The centre is headed by Major General Abdullah Katirci and Major General Viktor Fedorenko, from the Turkish and Russian sides, respectively.

The main goal of the joint centre is to ensure control over implementation of relevant provisions of the 10 November trilateral statement. Turkish and Russian servicemen carry out tasks for co-ordination of measures aimed at ensuring compliance with the ceasefire regime. The centre informs the military leadership structures of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey and Russia, as well as the headquarters of the Russian peacekeeping forces on the cases of violations of obligations under the agreement and prepares proposals for addressing incidents. The centre's staff on duty collects and checks information and complaints from various sources related to violations of the agreement. Monitoring of the ceasefire is carried out on a permanent basis with the help of unmanned aerial vehicles.

The operation of the joint Turkish-Russian monitoring centre provides a critical input to the process of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation, and serves the broader objective of bringing about sustainable peace, security and stability to the South Caucasus region. We once again encourage the OSCE participating States to extend their support to the trilateral agreements, including to the activities of the joint Turkish-Russian centre. By so

doing, the OSCE participating States will provide their humble contribution to building peace and stability in our region based on shared principles and commitments.

In closing, we would like to demonstrate a short video on the operation of the joint centre.

I kindly request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1302
11 February 2021
Annex 6

Original: ENGLISH

1302nd Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1302, Agenda item 5(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

I thank the distinguished Azerbaijani Ambassador for informing the Permanent Council on the latest developments.

The statement by the President of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation on 10 November was an important step.

A significant aspect of this statement is the monitoring of the ceasefire. A memorandum for establishing a joint centre with the Russian Federation in Azerbaijan was signed between the Turkish Minister of National Defence and his Russian counterpart on 11 November 2020.

The joint centre which is located close to the village of Merzili in the Ağdam district became operational on 30 January 2021. The Turkish Deputy Minister of National Defence Mr. Karaosmanoğlu, the Azerbaijani Minister of Defence Mr. Hasanov and the Russian Deputy Minister of Defence Mr. Fomin attended the inauguration.

Turkey believes that the joint centre will contribute to establishing and maintaining peace and stability in the region.

We join Azerbaijan's call that the OSCE and its participating States support the two trilateral statements.

Madam Chairperson,

As we have stated on a number of occasions also here in the Permanent Council, Turkey believes that the way for sustainable peace and stability can be paved together. New opportunities will arise and the whole region will benefit from this process. We sincerely believe that the Armenian people will ultimately also be winners in the peace.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ALBANIA**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

I am taking the floor to inform this distinguished Council that the President of the Republic of Albania has decreed the date of the next regular parliamentary elections in Albania to be held on 25 April 2021.

In line with relevant OSCE commitments and in compliance with the Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania, the Government of the Republic of Albania has the honour to extend an invitation to all participating States to the OSCE, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to observe the abovementioned elections.

The Republic of Albania remains committed to a fair, transparent, and well-managed election process as the epitome of our democracy.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.