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**Chairmanship: Italy****1179th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 15 March 2018

Opened: 10.10 a.m.

Suspended: 12.55 p.m.

Resumed: 3.05 p.m.

Closed: 4.40 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador A. Azzoni

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

Agenda item 1: REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION TO  
SERBIA

Chairperson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia (PC.FR/6/18 OSCE+), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/294/18/Rev.1), Norway (PC.DEL/324/18), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/310/18), Turkey (PC.DEL/293/18 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/308/18 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/282/18), Albania (PC.DEL/291/18 OSCE+), Serbia

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

(a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/285/18), Canada (PC.DEL/317/18 OSCE+), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; 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/295/18), Turkey (PC.DEL/319/18 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/307/18 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/283/18), Norway (PC.DEL/325/18)

- (b) *Situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/303/18), Ukraine
- (c) *The death penalty in Belarus and the United States of America:* Norway (also on behalf of Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) (PC.DEL/327/18), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/296/18), Belarus, United States of America
- (d) *Illegal elections in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and city of Sevastopol, Ukraine:* Ukraine (Annex 1), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/298/18), United States of America (PC.DEL/287/18), Canada (PC.DEL/315/18 OSCE+), Georgia (PC.DEL/321/18 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/320/18 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/306/18 OSCE+)
- (e) *Glorification of Nazism in Latvia:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/297/18), Latvia (PC.DEL/318/18 OSCE+)
- (f) *Detention of Mr. O. Titiev, head of the Memorial Human Rights Centre, in the Russian Federation:* Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Australia, Canada, Georgia and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/300/18), United States of America (PC.DEL/290/18), Norway (PC.DEL/328/18), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/309/18 OSCE+)
- (g) *Statement in response to the current issue on recent developments in the Transnistrian settlement process in Moldova, raised at the 1178th Permanent Council meeting held on 8 March 2018:* Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Liechtenstein and Norway,

members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Moldova, in alignment) (PC.DEL/301/18), United States of America (PC.DEL/292/18), Moldova

- (h) *Nerve agent attack in Salisbury, United Kingdom*: United Kingdom (Annex 2), Chairperson, United States of America (PC.DEL/289/18/Rev.1), Canada (PC.DEL/314/18 OSCE+), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/302/18), Australia (Partner for Co-operation) (PC.DEL/311/18 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/326/18), Switzerland (PC.DEL/305/18 OSCE+), Lithuania (also on behalf of Estonia and Latvia) (PC.DEL/322/18 OSCE+), Lithuania, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Romania, Georgia (PC.DEL/323/18 OSCE+), Turkey, Netherlands (PC.DEL/313/18), France, Germany, Ukraine, Ireland, Austria, Spain, Russian Federation (Annex 3)

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

- (a) *Address by the Chairperson-in-Office to the United Nations Security Council on 8 March 2018*: Chairperson
- (b) *Presentation of the Armenia Co-operation Programme, to be held on 19 March 2018*: Chairperson

Agenda item 4:           REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of a written report of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/45/18 OSCE+)*: OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
- (b) *Visit of the Secretary General to The Hague, Netherlands, on 14 March 2018*: OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SEC.GAL/45/18 OSCE+)
- (c) *Participation of the Secretary General in the 61st session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs on 13 March 2018*: OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SEC.GAL/45/18 OSCE+)
- (d) *Gender side event held at the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York on 13 March 2018*: OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SEC.GAL/45/18 OSCE+)
- (e) *OSCE Security Days expert roundtable on “Adding value on the ground: enhancing OSCE impact through field activities”, to be held on 27 April 2018*:

OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SEC.GAL/45/18 OSCE+)

- (f) *OSCE Secretariat visibility report for January and February 2018: OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SEC.GAL/45/18 OSCE+)*

Agenda item 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Tashkent International High-Level Conference on Afghanistan, to be held on 26 and 27 March 2018: Uzbekistan (PC.DEL/316/18), Chairperson, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/299/18), Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan (Partner for Co-operation)*
- (b) *Information event “Fair Justice for All: Providing Impetus to Radical Changes in Ukraine’s Judiciary”, to be held on 19 March 2018: Ukraine*

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 22 March 2018, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal



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**1179th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1179, Agenda item 2(d)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE**

Mr. Chairperson,

Ukraine strongly condemns the intention of the Russian Federation to illegally hold presidential elections on 18 March 2018 on the territory of the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which constitute an integral part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

These actions violate Ukraine's legislation and the fundamental norms and principles of international law, including the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, UN General Assembly resolution 68/262 "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine", UN General Assembly resolutions 71/205 and 72/190, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum as well as numerous international agreements to which Russia is a party.

Once again, Russia is attempting to legitimize the outcomes of its aggression against Ukraine. It is therefore critical for the international community to respond by strengthening sanctions imposed on the aggressor State.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has notified the Russian side of its protest against the holding of the Russian presidential election on the territory of the temporarily occupied Crimea. Ukraine has also cautioned Moscow against attempts to organize Russian elections on the occupied territory of Donbas. The organization of voting in the Russian presidential election in the diplomatic representations of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine would be accepted by the Government of Ukraine in case of the full respect by the Russian Federation of Ukraine's legitimate claims.

Persons who are involved in the preparation and conduct of illegal elections on the sovereign territory of Ukraine will be liable to criminal prosecution in accordance with the national legislation of Ukraine.

Distinguished colleagues,

Ukraine calls upon the OSCE participating States to be strictly guided by UN General Assembly resolutions 68/262, 71/205 and 72/190 and not to recognize the legitimacy or outcome of the elections of the President of the Russian Federation in the illegally occupied Crimean peninsula.

It is also necessary to take into account that 1.5 million Crimean voters will have a considerable impact on the final results of the presidential elections in Russia.

We are aware of the fact that the Russian Federation is taking measures to invite politicians from OSCE participating States to Crimea to observe the fake “elections” and to pay for their visits. In this regard, we remind that visits to Ukraine’s territory of the Crimean peninsula, which is currently illegally occupied by Russia, can only take place with the consent of the Ukrainian authorities. Violation of the rules of entry and exit from the peninsula entail legal consequences in accordance with Ukrainian legislation.

We once again urge the Russian Federation to return to the tenets of international law and reverse its illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which are part of Ukraine’s sovereign territory within internationally recognized borders.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



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**1179th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1179, Agenda item 2(h)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Mr. Chairperson,

It is with great regret that I take the floor today to inform the Permanent Council of deeply concerning events that have taken place in the United Kingdom over the past days.

On the afternoon of Sunday, 4 March, in the beautiful cathedral city of Salisbury in Wiltshire, a father and his daughter, Sergei and Yulia Skripal, were taken gravely ill whilst walking through the city centre. Both remain critically ill. A British police officer who was among members of the emergency services responding to the incident also fell seriously ill and has spent the past days in hospital in intensive care. More than thirty other people have also sought medical treatment. As the nature of the Skripals' illness became clear, a major police-led operation sought to identify the poison, locate its source, and decontaminate the affected locations and ensure the safety of the public. That operation, those investigations are ongoing.

As the Prime Minister told the British Parliament, it is clear that Mr. Skripal and his daughter had been poisoned with a military-grade nerve agent. I repeat, a military-grade nerve agent. This agent has been identified by our experts at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down, as a type developed in Russia, part of a group of agents known as "novichok". On Monday, my Prime Minister told Parliament that it was highly likely that Russia, a participating State of the OSCE, was responsible, either as a direct act or because Russia had lost control of a catastrophically damaging military-grade nerve agent.

This assessment was based not only on the positive identification of the nerve agent and our knowledge that the Russian Federation has previously produced this agent and still has the capability to do so, but also on the Russian State's record of State-sponsored assassinations, and indeed public statements indicating that defectors may be seen as legitimate targets.

The British Government sought an urgent explanation from Russia, asking Moscow for immediate and full disclosure of the "novichok" programme to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Russia's response so far has demonstrated complete disdain for the gravity of these events. There has been no explanation of how this nerve agent

came to be used in the United Kingdom. And no explanation as to why Russia, a participating State of the OSCE, has an undeclared chemical weapon programme – in clear contravention of international law. There is no alternative conclusion other than that the Russian State was culpable for this heinous act. This represents an unlawful use of force by the Russian Federation in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Chairperson, I need hardly remind the Permanent Council that no State Party which has committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention should in any way be linked to, or responsible for, the use of chemical weapons. Only one week ago, in the Forum for Security Co-operation, Russia reported on the destruction of historical chemical weapon stocks. Events of the last week cast significant doubt on that statement.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is not the only international commitment brought into question by this attack, the first offensive use of nerve agent of any sort on European territory since the Second World War.

This was a grotesque crime that not only targeted individuals in a particularly barbaric way but which was perpetrated without regard to the safety of the British emergency services or indeed of local residents and visitors going about their ordinary lives on a Sunday afternoon.

I repeat, Mr. Chairperson, this was an unlawful use of force against the United Kingdom.

But it is not simply a bilateral matter. This crime violates the letter and spirit of the Helsinki Final Act. It damages the concept of confidence-building that this Organization strives to develop. And it undermines the principles on which this Organization is founded.

No participating State of the OSCE should feel comfortable with what happened on the streets of Salisbury. No participating State.

Mr. Chairperson, police investigations are ongoing, decontamination operations are ongoing, and medical care for the victims of this attack is ongoing.

For now, allow me to express my thanks for the many messages of support from friends, allies and partners around this table and for the strong expressions of solidarity from many capitals represented here.

I will close by echoing the words of my Prime Minister. This is an affront to the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. And an affront to the rules-based system on which we depend. We will work with our allies and partners to confront such actions wherever they threaten our security, at home and abroad.

Mr. Chairperson, please attach this statement to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.





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

PC.JOUR/1179  
15 March 2018  
Annex 3

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

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**1179th Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1179, Agenda item 2(h)

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

Mr. Chairperson,

We have listened to the collection of irresponsible accusations and speculation presented in the now characteristic British style of “highly likely”. The United Kingdom’s actions are blatantly provocative in nature. On 6 March, British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson spoke in Parliament as if the investigation were already over and Russia were responsible for what took place in Salisbury. This haste surprises us.

I recall that the media first reported this incident on 4 March. Not the slightest attempt was made to get to the bottom of the situation together with us, despite the fact that Russia immediately expressed its readiness for such co-operation. We received no information via official channels on the circumstances of this case, despite our repeated requests, and despite the fact that Yulia Skripal is a citizen of the Russian Federation. Our embassy in the United Kingdom sent several diplomatic notes to the Foreign Office, stating that Russia was not involved in this incident, and we also requested samples of the substance used and proposed a joint investigation. Our requests were refused. What we received instead were ultimatums that smacked of neocolonialism in tone. There has yet to be any proof of the alleged “Russian involvement” in this case. The British Government has forgotten completely about the presumption of innocence.

It is worth noting that during discussion of this case in the British Parliament, Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn asked that the MPs, at least, be briefed on the investigation’s results, but he too met with a refusal.

We expected that the United Kingdom would make an official request to start procedures provided for in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC). We know that Article IX, paragraph 2, of the CWC states that a State Party which receives a request for clarifications from another State Party shall provide a response as soon as possible, but in any case not later than ten days after the request. Before even receiving such a request we took the initiative of providing our clarifications on 13 March at the 87th session of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague. But we have yet to see an official request made in accordance with

the CWC, though we were ready to respond right from the start. The United Kingdom has also not made use of the possibilities offered by the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters.

Let me say a few words on the toxic substances alleged to have been used in this case. The Russian Federation destroyed its stocks of chemical weapons (this was confirmed by the OPCW in 2017), but chemical weapons development continued in the United Kingdom itself, and also in the United States of America, the Czech Republic and Sweden. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, laboratories producing toxic substances of the type alleged to have been used remained in a number of countries, including the Baltic States. Incidentally, Porton Down, the UK government laboratory for weapons of mass destruction, is very close to Salisbury. If the British Government is so certain that “novichok” gas was used, it is there that they will find its formula, samples, and perhaps even production. The gas’s creator, Vil Mirzayanov, has long since lived in the United States, where he was taken together with the technical documents on this chemical substance. Meanwhile, no research involving this substance conventionally called “novichok” was undertaken in Russia.

The biggest question, however, has not been addressed at all: What is the purpose of this scandal and in whose interests is it? There is a legal principle that tells us to look for those who would stand to benefit (*Cui prodest*). Who would stand to gain from such an incident right on the eve of Russia’s presidential election or of the football world cup, which Russia will host? And most important, what motive would Russia have for eliminating Sergei Skripal, who represented no threat to our country? I can think though of several States that would benefit greatly from this extremely timely incident and from blaming it on Russia.

As always, it is context that is important. What do we see in British domestic political life today? Above all, we see the unenviable position of Prime Minister Theresa May and her Cabinet, which, like the entire Conservative Party, have been split by the Brexit issue. There is no doubt that creating a stir around the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter is nothing but an attempt to divert public opinion from the problems related to Brexit.

Far more disturbing is another scandal, which the British authorities are attempting to play down by using the Skripal poisoning. I am referring to the paedophile network uncovered in the town of Telford. They had been operating for a whole 40 years, and their victims number more than 1,000 children, with the connivance of the police and the local authorities. We shall give a more detailed briefing on this gross violation of children’s rights in the United Kingdom at the next meeting of the Permanent Council.

Only yesterday, at the United Nations Security Council, Russia proposed adopting a Security Council presidential statement calling for co-operation between all parties to establish the truth. But the United Kingdom blocked this initiative too. We have no choice but to conclude that establishing the truth is the last thing on the British Government’s mind; it has completely different motives. As you say on your isles – it is not cricket.

Here in this hall we see that any attempts to steer the discussion in a professional direction are pushed instead by our British colleagues and the many participating States that show solidarity with the United Kingdom onto a track of political rhetoric and Russophobia in the hope that the Western world will do the customary falling into line and salute without

question in the name of this all-important solidarity. But you do not need the truth and you even find it dangerous.

Thank you for your attention. We ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.