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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1512th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 March 2025

**In response to the reports by the Chairpersons of the three Committees of the
Permanent Council**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have listened carefully to the presentations by the Chairpersons of the three Committees of the Permanent Council.

We are obliged to note once again that the work of these subsidiary bodies of the Permanent Council is not aligned with the tasks and scope of the OSCE as a multidisciplinary organization. Let us examine each of the three areas in more detail.

We would point out that the OSCE, as an effective and representative negotiating platform for an entire range of non-military aspects of security, is systematically losing the expertise that it has developed over many years of productive efforts. What we are getting instead are confrontational, politically biased and essentially fruitless discussions that are leading to an impoverishment of the Organization's expertise.

The issues of combating transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, cyberthreats and especially terrorism have not gone anywhere. On the contrary, these menaces to our societies are becoming increasingly acute in view of the crisis of trust and the collapse in pragmatic international co-operation. Denying this objective reality will merely aggravate the security situation in our Organization's area of responsibility. Against this backdrop, it is now three years in a row that there have been no thematic conferences under the aegis of the OSCE on counter-terrorism, combating drugs, police co-operation and other topics – events that, in many respects, constitute the sole available regional high-level expert platforms for the exchange of views on a wide range of matters related to the fight against transnational threats.

We have always called for and will continue to call for substantive and professional dialogue on these more than relevant topics, which, by the way, have been reaffirmed by a host of Ministerial Council decisions. In that regard, we exhort the Committee's Chairmanship to endeavour to correct these negative trends and revert to the traditional, tried-and-tested working pattern of that subsidiary body – without politicization and the weaving of extraneous issues into its agenda.

We note the commitment of the Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee, the distinguished Ambassador Melita Župevc, to ensuring that the work of that body is professional and effective.

The proposed selection of topics is, on the whole, in line with the commitments undertaken as part of the second “basket” and these topics remain relevant for the entire OSCE area. We are keen to engage in substantive and professional discussions involving experts from the participating States and staff from the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the Organization’s field operations.

At the same time, important and less politicized issues have so far been left out of the agenda – such issues as countering corruption and the laundering of criminal assets, digital transformation, the strengthening of trade and transport connectivity, the development of transport corridors and simplifying customs and border procedures. Perhaps it is time to assess the prospects of economic coexistence among the OSCE participating States, especially given the growing tempo of current events. We trust that these comments will be taken into account when the plan of events for the second half of the year is prepared.

We are under no illusions as to the difficulty of striking a balance of interests in an atmosphere of hostility at the OSCE, which is also having a negative impact on the Economic and Environmental Committee. In particular, we note that even the themes of the Committee’s meetings are worded in accordance with the priorities of a certain group of States. We should like to wish the Chairperson of the Committee greater independence in her work.

We for our part are ready to make strenuous efforts towards the resumption of normal functioning in the economic and environmental dimension on the basis of equal dialogue and taking participating States’ interests into account, and we urge our partners to do the same.

In the human dimension, unfortunately, no light is to be seen at the end of the tunnel. The Swedish Chairmanship of the relevant committee continues to abuse its powers and to ignore the legitimate interests of all participating States, reducing the work of a subsidiary body once known for its expertise to the churning of unbridled anti-Russian propaganda. The two meetings that have already taken place this year merely serve to confirm this fact. We once again call upon Sweden to refrain from “Ukrainianizing” the third “basket”. Arguments along the lines of “a majority decided thus” do not stand up to scrutiny, since the OSCE, as we must remind you, operates on the basis of the consensus rule.

Furthermore, we have noticed overlaps between the topics proposed by the Finnish Chairmanship for discussion in the human dimension in general and those proposed by Sweden for discussion within the Human Dimension Committee. We insist that such duplication is pointless and prevents the entire gamut of problems in the OSCE area from being discussed – in particular, the glorification of Nazism and the fight against neo-Nazism. This topic is especially relevant in the year of the 80th anniversary of victory in the Second World War. It is extremely important not to forget either about safeguarding the linguistic and educational rights of national minorities, children’s rights, the elimination of statelessness, the development of human contacts, freedom of movement and countering religious intolerance, not least through implementation of the tasking from the 2014 OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Basel with regard to drafting declarations on combating Christianophobia and Islamophobia.

We call upon Sweden to step up to the plate and, once and for all, rectify the situation. Copying the unquestionably baneful practices of previous Chairmanships and appealing to so-called precedent is causing the essence of work under the third “basket” to be hollowed out. The consequences could, unfortunately, prove to be most lamentable.

On the whole, we are obliged to note that the work of all three Committees of the Permanent Council is still marred by excessive politicization and suffused with the anti-Russian approaches of a number of States. This undermines the possibilities of making full use of the OSCE's potential for the benefit of all the participating States.

Focusing the Committees' activities on current challenges in the OSCE area is an important element in maintaining the overall functionality of our Organization and an immediate obligation of the Chairmanship-in-Office. We urge our Finnish colleagues, together with the Chairpersons of the three Committees, to set about responsibly shaping a balanced and unifying agenda.

Thank you for your attention.