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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1421st MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 May 2023

**In connection with the constitutional referendum in Uzbekistan**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the successful holding in Uzbekistan, a country with which we enjoy friendly relations, of a referendum on the adoption of a constitutional law on the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan as an important milestone in the country's democratic development.

According to the Russian observers who were actively involved in the work of the observation missions deployed by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and other organizations, the voting was conducted in an open manner and took place in a calm environment. The Republic's authorities created all the conditions for the organization of the plebiscite in full conformity with international norms and generally accepted democratic principles.

The results of the referendum in Uzbekistan clearly demonstrate the high degree of public support for President Mirziyoyev's policies and testify to the interest of Uzbeks in continuing the reforms undertaken by the Republic's leadership.

The findings of the Limited Referendum Observation Mission sent by the ODIHR to observe the constitutional referendum stand in contrast to these assessments. We agree with the comments by our Uzbek colleagues that these conclusions are politicized and detached from reality.

This is not surprising, however: non-objectivity remains a hallmark of the Office's election monitoring activities. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the double standards and geographical imbalances in the ODIHR's election-related activities and have cited specific examples of this.

Such distortions also lead to serious imbalances in the funding of the Office's work in this area, the needs of which grow from year to year. In 2021, for example, the ODIHR spent almost three times as much on the monitoring of electoral processes "east of Vienna" as it did on elections "west" of the Austrian capital. While it is true that the trend reversed in 2022, this was only because one fifth of all funds was spent on monitoring the midterm elections for the United States Congress.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs is directly linked to the lack of agreed election observation rules within the OSCE. This is precisely why Russia has long insisted on developing a consensus-based methodology for election observation.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our fundamental commitment to further strengthening the multifaceted Russo-Uzbek strategic partnership and alliance.

Thank you for your attention.