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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1438th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 September 2023

**On the destructive impact of the European Union's illegitimate sanctions on the
protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms**

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union continues to use illegal unilateral restrictive measures to exert pressure on countries regarded as “undesirable” by the Brussels bloc. The EU officials are not in the least embarrassed that, through their actions, they are undermining the United Nations Security Council’s prerogatives in relation to international law. As you know, sanctions exist in international law as a supplementary political tool for curbing threats to international peace and security.

In their classical, that is, legitimate form, sanctions are of a targeted nature, have a limited duration, and also take into account political, socio-economic, human rights and humanitarian implications. However, the European Union prefers to ignore these nuances, unrelentingly compiling anti-Russian sanctions lists that indiscriminately include Russian political figures, federal agencies and departments, members of the business community and the clergy, journalists, media outlets and even paediatricians. It goes without saying that this has nothing to do with upholding respect for human rights or democratic principles – something that the European Union likes to make such a song and dance about outside its area of responsibility.

In late June of this year, Russia’s Foundation for the Support and Protection of the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad and its Executive Director, Aleksandr Udaltsov, found themselves on the 11th edition of the sanctions lists. This purely humanitarian organization and its leadership are accused of allegedly implementing “politics of division” and of creating “instability and division” in many European countries.

The compilers of these lists have blithely deprived people living in difficult circumstances of the possibility of receiving help or material support. In 2022 alone, against the backdrop of a surge in Russophobia and discrimination against Russian and Russian-speaking people, the Foundation’s representatives and its foreign partners provided more than 15,000 legal consultations free of charge. The matters on which expert advice was most sought after had to do with ethnic, linguistic and religious discrimination; the persecution of civil society activists, including those from organizations of Russian

nationals abroad; restrictions on the work of Russian-language media; the biased consideration of cases in courts; the unlawful removal of children from their families; and violations of the rules for places of detention. In addition, thanks to the Foundation's efforts, more than a hundred people were able to pay for the services of lawyers in foreign courts of various jurisdictions.

By branding that human rights organization as being engaged in "Kremlin propaganda", the European Union and its Member States have once again demonstrated that all the assurances coming from Brussels as regards their commitment to the principles of democracy, justice, the rule of law and the promotion of tolerance in society are empty words. It is absolutely outrageous to ban humanitarian associations at a time when, for example, in the Baltic countries everything connected with Russia is being eradicated and thousands of people are at risk of deportation. What is more, for decades the Brussels bloc has been an aloof spectator to the massive and flagrant violations of the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population taking place in those countries. Now, however, the EU officials have gone even farther and banned the activities of those who were willing to assist citizens living there; they have outlawed alternative points of view and pro-Russian sympathies, and declared that all kinds of violations are somehow a consequence of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine.

Such actions are contrary to paragraph 18 of the CSCE Moscow Document of 1991, in which the participating States affirmed "their commitment to the rule of law" and "their dedication to supporting and advancing those principles of justice which form the basis of the rule of law". They are also contrary to Chapter VI, paragraph 2, of the CSCE Helsinki Document of 1992, which refers to their "strong determination to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to abide by the rule of law, to promote the principles of democracy and, in this regard, to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions, as well as to promote tolerance throughout society".

We call upon the relevant OSCE structures, first and foremost the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, to take a strong stand, in accordance with their mandates, against this latest Russophobic manoeuvre by the European Union and finally start paying proper attention to the destructive impact of illegitimate sanctions on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Thank you for your attention.