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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1382nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 July 2022

On the state of affairs surrounding the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation that developed around the 29th summer session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Birmingham (2–6 July) is regrettable. As you know, the Government of the United Kingdom refused to issue visas to parliamentarians from Russia and the Republic of Belarus. Such discriminatory conduct by the UK authorities is incompatible with the status of a major city hosting an international event. The British were not up to the task of ensuring the presence of all the participating States. The infringement of the rights of the Russian and Belarusian delegations is wrong. We understand what it is about: they were afraid to hear the truth.

This blatant discrimination against the delegations of two participating States is in direct violation of the 2016 Tbilisi Declaration and its resolution on unrestricted access of members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly attending official OSCE events and other parliamentary activities. The document agreed in the Georgian capital notes that “travel restrictions resulting from sanctions regimes have a negative impact on parliamentary diplomacy and contribute to the aggravation of tensions among the participating States.”

Furthermore, the Assembly requested the participating States “to abide by their commitment to guarantee to all members of the Parliamentary Assembly the freedom to attend any official OSCE events and other parliamentary activities by issuing any visas or travel permits required for entry into their territories for at a minimum the duration of the above-mentioned activities, unless otherwise contrary to the principles of international law”.

Naturally, Russia will not recognize the outcomes of the Birmingham session. We consider them illegitimate given the *de facto* exclusion of Russian and Belarusian parliamentarians from the Assembly’s activities. OSCE events should be held only in those countries that guarantee equal and unhindered participation by representatives of all participating States. We draw the attention of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Secretariat and all our colleagues to this. If the host State does not guarantee the arrival of all the delegates in accordance with the memorandum, is it appropriate to schedule a session there? You come out of this looking abject and helpless.

Esteemed colleagues,

Do you realize that you have embarked on a dangerous course of total politicization and destruction of an important mechanism of security co-operation in Europe? You are breaking your own rules when it suits you. For the second year in a row, the rules for counting votes have not been observed. When voting on the odious Ukrainian amendment, the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly were violated, in particular paragraph 10 of Rule 22, which stipulates the need for “unanimous agreement by the members of the Committee or plenary present”. As you know, in the room there were both members who voted against and members who abstained.

Be warned: responsibility for these destructive steps will fall entirely on those who are provoking discord and deepening dividing lines in the OSCE’s area of responsibility. Russia is guided by common sense and has consistently maintained that meaningful dialogue in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly may ultimately be called for once the acute phase of the current politico-military crisis has passed. This will certainly only be possible once the objectives of Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine have been fully and unconditionally achieved.

To conclude, we are convinced that participating States should “do everything possible to support and strengthen interparliamentary dialogue and interaction, which are especially important in times of crisis”. I think this is unlikely to interest the majority in the room, but those words are again a quote from the Tbilisi Declaration, which was recently trampled underfoot in Birmingham. Nevertheless, Russia hopes for equal and mutually beneficial co-operation with all members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Thank you for your attention.