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PC.DEL/913/21
14 June 2021

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

Delegation of Germany

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GESA BRÄUTIGAM,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
GERMANY, AT THE 1319th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 June 2021

**On agenda item 2: Address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić**

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. As my country held the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe until recently – from November to May – I should like to add a few words in a national capacity.

Madam Secretary General,

On behalf of the Federal Government, I should like to expressly thank you, Ms. Pejčinović Burić, for the excellent and always helpful co-operation during our Presidency. Given the pandemic situation, face-to-face meetings were not a matter of course. We were all the more pleased to be able to welcome you personally to Germany several times during our Presidency – most recently on 21 May in Hamburg at the ministerial meeting to mark the end of our Presidency.

The past year and the pandemic have posed new challenges to societies and governments worldwide. That is why, during our Presidency, we worked to strengthen the Council of Europe in core areas that are also essential to us here in the OSCE: the defence of human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

The protection and independence of the judiciary are the be-all and end-all of the rule of law. The consistent implementation of the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights remains one of our priorities beyond our Presidency. Together with you, Madam Secretary General, we will continue to work to strengthen and further develop pan-European human rights protection, at the heart of which are the European Convention on Human Rights and more than 220 other conventions.

One test we face is the field of artificial intelligence and the question of the ethical foundation. With your support, dear Ms. Pejčinović Burić, we were able to move this important dossier forward. Here we are well on the way towards a Council of Europe legal instrument.

Another challenge is the problem of hate speech and the increasingly frequent lies, hate-mongering, untruths and threats on the Internet. We have laid important foundations for Council of Europe recommendations for tackling hate speech on the Internet together.

Negotiations on the European Union's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights are also moving forward again after years of interruption. Accession will ensure even more coherent protection of human rights in Europe.

Madam Secretary General,

The Strategic Framework presented by you offers a good basis for the work in the coming years. This also applies to the Council of Europe's co-operation with the OSCE, which should be further intensified. Challenges such as tackling hate speech or artificial intelligence cannot be dealt with at the national level, but only through multilateral co-operation.

I wish much success to you, Madam Secretary General, for your further work in the Council of Europe – and to Hungary as holder of the new Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.