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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1319th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 June 2021

**In response to the address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
Marija Pejčinović Burić**

Madam Secretary General,

We are pleased to welcome you once again to a meeting of the Permanent Council.

As is well known, in 2005 a Permanent Council decision (PC.DEC/670) set out four priority areas for co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, namely the fight against terrorism, combating trafficking in human beings, the rights of national minorities, and tolerance and non-discrimination. These topics remain relevant. It is important that the activities of the two organizations should be co-ordinated in order to avoid duplication and unnecessary dissipation of resources. There is still room for improving the quality of the joint work – among other ways, through the Council of Europe-OSCE Co-ordination Group and the relevant OSCE executive structures.

We know that at the session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe held in Hamburg on 21 May this year, proposals were adopted for developing co-operation between the Council of Europe and other international organizations, including the OSCE. We would be interested to know the specific intentions of the Council of Europe in this regard.

In our view, there continues to be demand for the efforts by the OSCE and the Council of Europe to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, aggressive nationalism, neo-Nazism, religious intolerance, and discrimination against Christians and Muslims. Both bodies should speak out against the clamping down on freedom of the media and on linguistic, educational and religious rights.

In that respect, we must draw your attention, Madam Secretary General, to the lack of an adequate response by the monitoring mechanisms of the Council of Europe to the gross and massive violations of human rights in Ukraine and the Baltic States. The glorification of Nazis and their accomplices is flourishing there. Bans are being imposed preventing the Russian-speaking inhabitants of these countries from receiving a full cycle of education in their mother tongue.

In the case of Ukraine, there are also restrictions on people using their mother tongue in public and political life – even in day-to-day life – along with an extrajudicial ban on opposition television channels,

suppression of freedom of speech, political repression of the opposition, and much more besides. In so doing, the Ukrainian Government is systematically ignoring the recommendations of the Council of Europe, including those contained in the Venice Commission's opinion dated 9 December 2019 regarding the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of Ukrainian as the State Language.

In May, the Ukrainian authorities announced their intention to submit a draft law on the so-called transitional period to the Venice Commission. This draft law, whose text was published at the start of the current year, contravenes, in its conceptual framework, a number of key provisions of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015, which was endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202.

We understand that analysing legislative initiatives to assess their compatibility with the Minsk agreements does not fall within the purview of the Council of Europe. Nevertheless, we are once again obliged to draw attention to the destructive attempts by the Ukrainian authorities to involve international partners in their efforts to rewrite – if not *de jure*, then *de facto* – the Minsk agreements and to impose a logic for the settlement process other than that provided for in the Package of Measures.

The inhumane water blockade on Russian Crimea deserves special attention. The Ukrainian authorities' attempts to inflict in this way an idiosyncratic collective punishment on the peninsula's inhabitants for having freely expressed their will in 2014 are not only outside the norms of international law but also beyond the bounds of morality.

The Russian Federation consistently advocates preserving the role of the Council of Europe as one of the core international organizations on the European continent which monitors the humanitarian and legal space from Lisbon to Vladivostok as an integral whole. A unique system of Convention mechanisms makes the Council of Europe an important tool for advancing our common priorities. We firmly believe that the future of the Council of Europe hinges on its ability to retain its independence and truly pan-European nature, to avoid being held to ransom by a bloc-based mentality and attitudes, and to work in the interests of all of the continent's countries without applying selective approaches to human rights or double standards.

The key to this is returning to a culture of consensus and strict compliance with the Statute of the Council of Europe – what is more, both by all the member States and by the bodies of the Council itself. We have already witnessed how going beyond one's statutory powers has led, in the case of individual international organizations and their structures and secretariats, to uncontrollable consequences.

We cannot but be alarmed by the politicization of the work of the European Court of Human Rights, whose impartiality must perforce remain a prerequisite not only for its own operations but also for the functioning of the entire human rights system of the Council of Europe. Inter-State applications lodged against Russia are multiplying. Generally accepted norms of international law are being flouted, the culmination of this being the "effective control" doctrine. The principle of the Court's subsidiarity is being disregarded. The European Convention on Human Rights is being subjected to expansive interpretation. With the process of the European Union's accession to the Convention dragging on, the European Commission tries to bargain and secure preferences for itself in relation to implementation of the Convention.

The Russian Federation considers it important that a unifying agenda be established, and supports the efforts undertaken to that end by all constructively minded forces. It is essential to preserve the multidisciplinary nature of the Council of Europe and to pay due attention to such areas as combating terrorism and drug trafficking; the regulation of artificial intelligence; history teaching; cultural, youth and sports issues; and the defence of traditional family values. In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, the

potential of the Council of Europe for bringing States together in their efforts related to public health and to upholding social rights is in greater demand than ever before.

In closing, Madam Secretary General, I should like as always to assure you of Russia's support for steps aimed at overcoming differences and creating an atmosphere conducive to reaching compromise solutions. I wish you and your staff the best of health and success.

Thank you for your attention.