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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR GESA BRÄUTIGAM, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, AT THE 1390th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 September 2022

**On the agenda item: Moscow Mechanism invoked by 38 OSCE participating States
in relation to particularly serious threats to the fulfilment of the provisions of the
OSCE human dimension by the Russian Federation**

Mr. Chairperson,

The representative of the European Union has already spoken also on behalf of Germany. I should like to add the following.

The impressive and comprehensive report by Professor Nußberger has unequivocally shown that the Russian Federation is systematically violating its human dimension commitments. Political and civil rights can *de facto* no longer be exercised in Russia. Any opposition is crushed without restraint.

The evidence regarding Russia's systematic violation of its commitments is overwhelming. But that is not all. By suppressing Russian civil society, the Russian Federation also laid and continues to lay the groundwork for its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. In her report, Professor Nußberger vividly compares this to a system of communicating tubes: repression on the inside and aggression on the outside are mutually dependent.

Professor Nußberger,

As your country of origin, the Federal Republic of Germany could not join in invoking the Moscow Mechanism. However, we expressly support the measure and also share the reaction of the 38 invoking States. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your willingness to support the OSCE with your valuable expertise under difficult circumstances.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to single out one aspect from the comprehensive report: the Russian allegations of neo-Nazism. Because of the terrible crimes committed by the National Socialists in the 1930s and 1940s, Germany is particularly committed to objectively coming to terms with its own history and to reconciliation.

For months we have been hearing and reading how President Putin and his propagandists in the Russian State media stigmatize the citizens of Ukraine as “neo-Nazis” and “ultranationalists” and denigrate the democratically elected Government as the “Kyiv pro-Nazi regime”. Such designations are not only completely unacceptable in terms of content, but are also extremely dangerous because they deliberately incite hatred and contempt for humanity.

The Russian Federation has never been concerned with warning against right-wing extremist forces. On the contrary, the Russian Federation is cynically misusing historical terms to vilify anything that stands up to its imperial ambitions. In this way, the Russian leadership reinterprets historical events and cultivates an image of the enemy. The Russian leadership uses this to justify its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and all its atrocities and war crimes. At the same time, stereotypes of Soviet propaganda and other targeted slurs are used at home to discredit and dehumanize those who deviate from the Russian Government’s line. This is vividly described in the report: “Those who oppose it are seen as nails sticking out of the wall; they must be hammered into the wall and disappear. The President’s speeches about a ‘fifth column’ and ‘insects to be spat out’ reveal an attitude of deep-seated hatred.”

The Russian Government is deliberately creating a climate of fear and intimidation. Free public discourse, including and especially about the history of Russia and the Soviet Union, does not exist. The report lists numerous legal measures aimed at controlling the image of history and appropriating public discussion about the history of Russia and the Soviet Union. At the same time, Russian propaganda deliberately creates internal and external images of the enemy in order to suppress any dissent and foment aggression against the Ukrainian population.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian Federation has twice derailed negotiations on the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting agenda by insisting on neo-Nazism as a special topic. In view of the present report, Russia’s behaviour appears cynical and hypocritical.

Mr. Chairperson,

You did well not to let the annual conference on the third dimension, which is essential for us all and for a vibrant civil society in the OSCE area, fail because of Russia’s stonewalling. We must always review critically the implementation of our commitments in the human dimension. The Vienna and Moscow Mechanisms also serve this purpose. The latter would not be possible without the important and demanding work of the independent experts. You, Professor Nußberger, therefore deserve our sincere thanks for your outstanding commitment and in-depth report.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day. Thank you.