
Chairmanship: Poland**1353rd PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 3 February 2022 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Closed: 1.10 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador A. Hałaciński

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson and the Secretary General congratulated the participating States celebrating their thirtieth anniversary of joining the CSCE.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: ADDRESS BY THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ITALY, H.E. MR. BENEDETTO DELLA VEDOVA

Chairperson, Chair of the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe (PC.DEL/113/22), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/118/22), France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/119/22), United States of America (PC.DEL/106/22), Turkey (PC.DEL/126/22 OSCE+), Georgia (PC.DEL/128/22 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Armenia (PC.DEL/131/22), Azerbaijan, Ukraine (PC.DEL/125/22), Switzerland (PC.DEL/108/22 OSCE+), Belarus (PC.DEL/107/22 OSCE+)

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea*: Ukraine (PC.DEL/124/22), France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/122/22), Canada (PC.DEL/129/22 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/127/22 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/114/22 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/109/22), United Kingdom
- (b) *Deteriorating situation in Ukraine and continued non-implementation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/111/22), Ukraine
- (c) *Political prisoners in Belarus*: France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/120/22), United Kingdom (also on behalf of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States of America) (Annex 1), Belarus (PC.DEL/117/22 OSCE+)
- (d) *Execution of Mr. M. Reeves in the state of Alabama, United States of America*: France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Andorra, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/121/22), Switzerland (also on behalf of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) (PC.DEL/130/22 OSCE+), Canada (PC.DEL/130/22 OSCE+), United Kingdom
- (e) *Broadcasting ban imposed on the television channel RT DE*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/110/22), Germany (Annex 2)

Agenda item 3: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Address by the Chairman-in-Office to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (US Helsinki Commission), to be delivered in Washington, DC, on 3 February 2022*: Chairperson
- (b) *Meeting between the Chairman-in-Office, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, H.E. Mr. J. Borrell,*

the Secretary General of NATO, H.E. Mr. J. Stoltenberg and the Secretary of State of the United States of America, H.E. Mr. A. Blinken, held via video teleconference on 1 February 2022: Chairperson

- (c) *Recent developments on the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border: Chairperson*
- (d) *The Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue: Chairperson (CIO.GAL/11/22)*
- (e) *Visit of the Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Mr. A. Dmochowski, to the OSCE Field Missions in Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia and Kosovo: Chairperson*
- (f) *Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region, to be held in Warsaw and via video teleconference on 7 and 8 February 2022: Chairperson*

Agenda item 4: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of the Secretary General's weekly report (SEC.GAL/15/22 OSCE+): Secretary General*
- (b) *Announcement by the Secretary General of the forthcoming thematic report on climate change, to be presented on 17 February 2022: Secretary General*
- (c) *Meeting of the Secretary General with the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council, Ms. M. Bregu, on 1 February 2022: Secretary General*
- (d) *Participation of the Secretary General in the Eleventh Ministerial Meeting of the (United Nations) Group of Friends of Mediation held on 2 February 2022: Secretary General*

Agenda item 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 10 February 2022, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



1353rd Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1353, Agenda item 2(c)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA,
CANADA, CROATIA, CYPRUS, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK,
ESTONIA, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY,
ICELAND, IRELAND, ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG,
MALTA, MONTENEGRO, THE NETHERLANDS, NORTH
MACEDONIA, NORWAY, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA,
SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND,
UKRAINE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

Mr. Chairperson,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, and the United States of America.

Civil society organizations reported last week that the number of political prisoners in Belarus has now reached 1,000 and continues to grow.

An initial response to the subsequent reply provided by the Belarusian delegation was provided in a statement on 18 November 2021. In that initial response, regret was expressed that there appeared to be no material change in approach by the Belarusian authorities. The shameful milestone of 1,000 political prisoners demonstrates that it was right to remain concerned.

The initial letter invoking the Vienna Mechanism asked for information on the credible reports of continuing arbitrary or unjust arrests or detentions, and on the targeting of opposition figures. The reply of 12 November 2021 by the Belarusian delegation took exception to the words “political prisoner”.

We wish to be crystal clear. By “political prisoners” we mean individuals who have been detained or imprisoned for politically motivated reasons for peacefully exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association. It includes where the length of detention or the conditions of detention are clearly not proportionate. In this regard, we reference the cases mentioned in the invocation of the Vienna Mechanism, including the cases of Maria Kolesnikava and Maksim Znak.

Despite the pressures they are facing, civil society organizations and human rights defenders have continued to monitor the numbers of political prisoners in Belarus. The well-respected civil society organization Viasna lists political prisoners according to the criteria of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). Set against those criteria, Viasna judges that today there are currently 1,022 political prisoners in Belarus. Unfortunately, Viasna and its staff have also been subject to harassment and unjust detention. Some of the more than a thousand political prisoners being held include Viasna staff and volunteers, dedicated human rights defenders who want to see a better future for their country – individuals such as Viasna Chairman Ales Bialiatski, Valiantsin Stefanovich and Volunteer Co-ordinator Marfa Rabkova.

Other high profile cases of concern include those of Viktor Babaryka, as well as the 14 December 2021 politically motivated convictions of Belarusian opposition figures Syarhey Tsikhanouski, Mikalai Statkevich, Radio Liberty journalist Ihar Losik, and chairperson of a national minority organization, Andželika Borys.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Belarusian delegation has often claimed to seek a dialogue on the issues which we have regularly raised in the Permanent Council. The Vienna Mechanism is a tool for such dialogue, but in order for it to be a true dialogue it requires the Belarusian authorities to engage substantively, realistically and honestly on the subject. It requires them to recognize our legitimate continuing concerns, which mirror those of civil society, independent media and human rights defenders.

As part of our efforts to create a constructive dialogue, we today ask the delegation of Belarus to consider carefully, and reply to, the following questions:

1. Will the Belarusian authorities, in the interests of transparency and dialogue, publish their full response to the Vienna Mechanism invocation?
2. To enhance the base of independent evidence for our dialogue, will the Belarusian authorities invite the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to monitor any criminal or administrative trials that ODIHR deem to be of wider interest to the participating States?
3. To enhance the base of independent evidence for our dialogue, will the Belarusian authorities agree to an inquiry by an independent international expert, or experts, given the mounting credible reports of arbitrary or unjust arrests or detentions, of the targeting for reprisal of opposition figures, and of political prisoners?

Finally, we again call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Belarus. We urge the Belarusian authorities to fully implement their international obligations and OSCE commitments, and to make use of the OSCE's tools and mechanisms to help resolve the continuing crisis.

We request that this statement be added to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1353
3 February 2022
Annex 2

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

1353rd Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1353, Agenda item 2(e)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY**

Mr. Chairperson,

Since the Russian Ambassador mentioned Germany in his statement, I should like to briefly exercise my right of reply.

Under Article 5, paragraph (1), sentence 2, of the Basic Law regarding freedom of broadcasting, in Germany the State may not directly or – through financing – indirectly influence broadcasting (radio and television). For that reason, media oversight is organized independently of the State. Minister for Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock assured the distinguished Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov of this at their last meeting.

According to the regulations in force, a licence is required to operate a broadcasting station. Verification of the legal licence situation of the broadcaster RT is a matter solely for the competent independent state media authorities. So far, the necessary licence has neither been applied for nor granted. Decisions by the Commission on Licensing and Supervision are based solely on the legal situation without political influence. Moreover, the decisions may be appealed against.

The threat of political reprisals against German media is emphatically rejected. German media abroad abide by the regulations in force there and there is no basis whatsoever for politically motivated measures.

Press freedom is a cornerstone of our democracy in Germany and a valuable asset. It is enshrined in the German Constitution and is also guaranteed for foreign media, not least through the granting of licences independently of the Federal Government.

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