

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/1614/22  
28 October 2022

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1396th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 October 2022

**On the report by the Director of the OSCE Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Centre**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä for her report on the work of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) over the past year. We should like to comment on a number of aspects.

It is difficult, Ms. Yrjölä, to deem the CPC's work on Ukraine over the past year to have been effective. Unfortunately, we are obliged to note that our Organization was unable to properly use all the resources at its disposal to prevent massive violations of OSCE commitments by the Kyiv regime and, in general, the transformation of Ukraine into a source of major security threats. It is most discouraging that your report fails to present an analysis of the mistakes made and suggestions to rectify the situation.

We categorically disagree with the attempts to blame all the failures on the Russian special operation in Ukraine, which you, in violation of consensus wording, refer to as a "war against Ukraine". To reduce all the problems to 24 February means to completely ignore the entire genesis of the Ukrainian crisis, which began not in 2022, nor even in 2014, but considerably earlier, when a number of OSCE participating States, above all those that are NATO members, began to systematically turn Ukraine into an instrument of geopolitical confrontation with Russia. This campaign involved sacrificing the Ukrainian Government's implementation not merely of its OSCE commitments but also of many other international legal norms in the field of human rights and the rule of law.

For years, Russian representatives pointed to the need to rectify the deteriorating situation in Ukraine, not least through the OSCE. The Conflict Prevention Centre, at whose helm you stand, was meant to co-ordinate these efforts in the framework of our Organization and to steer, through specific measures, the activities of OSCE field operations in the region. However, the Office of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU) an entity under your supervision, persistently skirted topics that were awkward for the Ukrainian Government and ignored the large-scale persecution of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine, the suppression of freedom of the media, and gross violations in the operations of Ukraine's law enforcement and judicial systems. The Office of the PCU acted like a subcontractor for extrabudgetary assignments, as it were.

A further window of opportunity to make a significant contribution to resolving the situation opened up for the OSCE in 2014, when the “Maidan regime” in Kyiv, which had come to power in the wake of a bloody coup d’état, began a punitive operation against those who at the time were still its citizens in the east of the country, imposing a transport and economic blockade against them and simultaneously ramping up the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms throughout Ukraine. In the hope of bringing influence to bear on the situation, the OSCE participating States established the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), one of whose tasks was “to contribute ... to reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability and security; and to monitoring and supporting the implementation of all OSCE principles and commitments”. Moreover, in accordance with its mandate, the SMM was meant to “monitor and support respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities”.

In practice, though, the Mission veered off course: it adopted highly politicized approaches, focusing chiefly on the promotion of Western narratives in relation to the crisis in Ukraine. In its reports many inconvenient facts for the Ukrainian Government, such as the killing of civilians in Donbas by Ukrainian formations, were hushed up; the rise of Russophobia and aggressive nationalism in Ukraine was disregarded outright. In all the time that it operated, the SMM did not manage, or rather did not want, to prepare a thematic report on the situation regarding the rampant aggressive nationalism in Ukraine. Instead, the neo-Nazi torchlit processions of Ukrainian radicals were described in the Mission’s reports as “peaceful patriotic gatherings”. The SMM proved to be a complete fiasco on the diplomatic front as well. Even the limited contacts originally established by the head of the Mission with the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk were soon broken off to all intents and purposes.

Madam Director, if you will allow me to ask, has the CPC done everything that it could to rectify this situation? Have the hard lessons from the work on Ukraine been taken on board? In this regard, there are some alarming passages in your report about certain new programmes “requested by the host country and donors”, such as a so-called “Repository Programme for a Support Programme for Ukraine”. Are you suggesting that the OSCE should step on the same rake twice, that rather than attending to real problems it should carry out the political orders of countries sponsoring extrabudgetary projects? We trust that, in the spirit of transparency regarding the Secretariat’s work, you will submit these plans for consideration by the Permanent Council.

We are not prepared to accept the conclusion that “due to the political context affecting the OSCE region, the Organization’s conflict [settlement] formats have been facing serious impediments.” For example, as far as the Geneva International Discussions on Security and Stability in the Trans-Caucasus are concerned, the destructive nature of the actions of a number of participants in the discussions is obvious: in keeping with the anti-Russian campaign, they “froze” the work of that negotiation format for nine months. During the 56th round, which did after all take place at the start of this month, the Russian delegation exhorted the Co-Chairs to avoid politicizing the negotiation process.

The Transdniestrian settlement process has long since been devoid of any momentum. We would recall, in case anyone has forgotten, that the last meeting of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement in the “5+2” format was held in October 2019, that is, three years ago. In November 2021, after invitations had already been sent out to the participants, the negotiations failed to take place owing to the positions of individual parties. What can this possibly have to do with the “political context” over the past year?

As for the normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, we note the efforts by certain players from outside the region, which can hardly be described as well considered and attuned to the sensitivity of the matter. Moreover, the adoption of an essentially behind-the-scenes decision to deploy a team of experts to the region for “needs assessment” is a blatant violation of the consensus rule, which had been strictly

adhered to when responding to any crisis situations. This increases the risk of disruption to the balance that was achieved on the basis of the arrangements agreed on by the leaders of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan on 9 November 2020. With a view to discussing the nuances of the problems in the region, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, has invited the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, and the Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, to a further trilateral summit in Russia.

Turning to the subject of the conflict cycle, we should like to stress that the practical effectiveness of certain tools once again depends largely on a consensus approach being followed when considering the possibility of using various measures, as provided for, in particular, by a decision of the CSCE Helsinki Summit in 1992. We should also like to take this opportunity to ask you, Ms. Yrjölä, to share more detailed information about the development of a mechanism for “rapid response in the OSCE region”, which entails the creation of an “OSCE Strategic Asset Reserve”. We trust that this initiative will not turn out to be a non-consensus one. When is it planned to present the project in detail and to submit the conclusions of experts for consideration by the participating States?

Unfortunately, we again have to reiterate that it is unacceptable to implement programmatic activities dealing with concepts that do not enjoy consensus at the OSCE, which include, among others, “security sector governance and reform”. No commitments have been undertaken within our Organization that would allow for such activities. We consider United Nations Security Council resolution 2151, adopted in 2014, to be the sole international legal instrument that clearly defines the context and sets out principles for the provision of assistance with such reforms.

The situation in Afghanistan continues to pose a threat to regional security and to act as an epicentre radiating instability across the entire OSCE area. In this regard, we believe that it is, on the whole, legitimate to support the Central Asian States through the relevant structures of the Secretariat and the OSCE field operations in the region. Such work should be performed exclusively within the framework of the mandates that these have been given and irrespective of the specifics of the evolving situation in Afghanistan. We are convinced that what is required to overcome the Afghan crisis is a co-ordinated approach and practical co-operation with organizations that are already operating in the region, namely the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Ms. Yrjölä,

There is a need for more active involvement by the CPC in promoting dialogue at the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) on “hard” security issues in strict accordance with its mandate. We call upon the Centre’s management to pay close attention to the fact that the Forum is at present sharply deviating from its original goals as enshrined in the Helsinki Document 1992. As a consequence, activities in the OSCE’s politico-military dimension have taken a nosedive over the past year.

Use of the toolbox offered by the Vienna Document 2011 by a number of Western participating States for their own purely political purposes shifted the focus of the pan-European community’s attention away from the truly “unusual” aggressive military activity that was being conducted in Donbas near Russia’s borders over a period of eight years. In these circumstances our country was compelled to take decisive action in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

At the FSC, only one event in the annual cycle of events has been held, namely the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting on the Vienna Document 2011, and even so that was boycotted by Western participating States. The agenda of that autonomous decision-making body is teeming with irrelevant issues. At a time when it is important to build mutual understanding among participating States in the military sphere, the Structured Dialogue has fallen dormant.

That is not all, though. The surge in illicit trade in Western weapons from Ukrainian territory is in fact undermining the efforts carried out under OSCE assistance projects on stockpile management of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and conventional ammunition. At the same time, the whole set of arrangements agreed on at the OSCE to prevent SALW, man-portable air defence systems and ammunition from ending up on black markets are being flouted. We have yet to hear any principled assessments of these actions from the Organization's leadership.

It is within the CPC's power to help to reverse the aforementioned negative tendencies. The practical impact of the OSCE's politico-military dimension will otherwise sink to zero.

We for our part are willing to continue supporting the CPC's efforts aimed at maintaining expert dialogue on matters related to enhancement of the operations of the OSCE Communications Network. We also note the OSCE's contribution to the comprehensive review of the status of implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540. To promote the resolution's effective implementation, it would be important in our view to continue with further close co-operation between the OSCE and the 1540 Committee, should the Committee's mandate be extended.

Ms. Yrjölä,

The wide range of issues touched upon in our statement reflects the cross-cutting role played by the CPC, at whose helm you stand, in the OSCE's structure. The international prestige of our Organization as a whole depends in many respects on the effectiveness of that organizational unit. In closing, we wish you and the CPC staff good health and success in the work ahead of you.

Thank you for your attention.