



Chairmanship: Sweden

1310th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. Date: Thursday, 22 April 2021 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.
Suspended: 1.05 p.m.
Resumed: 3 p.m.
Closed: 5.10 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador T. Lorentzson

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

Agenda item 1: UPDATE BY THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE IN UKRAINE AND IN THE TRILATERAL CONTACT GROUP, AMBASSADOR HEIDI GRAU

Discussion under agenda item 2

Agenda item 2: REPORT BY THE CHIEF MONITOR OF THE OSCE SPECIAL MONITORING MISSION TO UKRAINE

Chairperson, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (PC.FR/9/21/Corr.1 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/564/21), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/594/21/Rev.1), United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland (PC.DEL/570/21 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/591/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/565/21), Holy See (PC.DEL/563/21 OSCE+), Bosnia and Herzegovina (PC.DEL/586/21 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/566/21), Georgia (PC.DEL/585/21 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/569/21)

Agenda item 3: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

- (a) *The aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters*: Armenia (Annex 1), Turkey (Annex 2)
- (b) *Earth Day, observed on 22 April 2021*: United States of America (PC.DEL/567/21), Portugal-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, Monaco, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/596/21/Rev.1), United Kingdom, Canada, Holy See (PC.DEL/568/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/577/21), Japan (Partner for Co-operation)
- (c) *Repression of the media in Latvia*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/575/21), Latvia (Annex 3), United States of America (PC.DEL/571/21)
- (d) *Violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Estonia*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/578/21), Estonia (PC.DEL/590/21 OSCE+)
- (e) *Freedom of the media in the Russian Federation*: Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/598/21), United Kingdom (also on behalf of Canada) (PC.DEL/573/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/572/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/584/21 OSCE+)
- (f) *Concerns relating to the detention of Mr. A. Navalny*: United Kingdom, Norway (PC.DEL/576/21), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/595/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/574/21), Canada, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/582/21 OSCE+), Germany (Annex 4)

Agenda item 4: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Address by the Chairperson-in-Office to the United Nations Security Council, held via video teleconference on 19 April 2021*: Chairperson
- (b) *Telephone conversation between the Chairperson-in-Office and the OSCE Secretary General*: Chairperson

- (c) *Meeting between the Chairperson-in-Office and the United Nations Secretary-General, held via video teleconference on 19 April 2021: Chairperson, Russian Federation*

Agenda item 5: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *New format for the report of the Secretary General to the Permanent Council (SEC.GAL/51/21/Corr.1 OSCE+): Secretary General*
- (b) *Report entitled “Regional Assessment for South-Eastern Europe: Security Implications of Climate Change”, published on 21 April 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/51/21/Corr.1 OSCE+)*
- (c) *Presentation of a thematic report to the Permanent Council on the OSCE’s efforts to prevent labour exploitation, to be held on 29 April 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/51/21/Corr.1 OSCE+)*
- (d) *Visit by the Secretary General to Poland, including the premises of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, from 19 to 21 April 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/51/21/Corr.1 OSCE+)*
- (e) *Meeting between the Secretary General and United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Ms. M. Coninx, held via video teleconference on 16 April 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/51/21/Corr.1 OSCE+)*
- (f) *Meeting between the Secretary General and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms. M. P. Burić, to be held via video teleconference on 23 April 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/51/21/Corr.1 OSCE+)*
- (g) *Participation by the Secretary General in an event organized by the Afghan Women’s Network (“Contacts, Connections and Camaraderie: A Network of Powerful Women Empowering Afghan Women in Peace and Security”), to be held on 27 April 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/51/21/Corr.1 OSCE+)*
- (h) *Responses to the report of the Secretary General: Switzerland, United Kingdom, Norway, Belarus, Secretary General (SEC.GAL/51/21/Corr.1 OSCE+), Chairperson*

Agenda item 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Addressing racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination during the post-pandemic recovery: Canada (also on behalf of Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (PC.DEL/579/21/Corr.1 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/581/21), Turkey (PC.DEL/593/21 OSCE+)*
- (b) *Referendum on the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, held on 11 April 2021: Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/583/21), United*

States of America (PC.DEL/580/21), United Kingdom, Portugal-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 Canada, in alignment) (PC.DEL/597/21), Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan

- (c) *Adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, on 16 April 2021, of a resolution entitled “Nature knows no borders: transboundary cooperation – a key factor for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use”:*
Kyrgyzstan

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 29 April 2021, at 10 a.m., via video teleconference



1310th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1310, Agenda item 3(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to begin by informing the Permanent Council that, on 20 April, the Azerbaijani armed forces – in gross violation of the trilateral statement signed on 9 November 2020 – opened small-arms fire on Stepanakert, the capital of Artsakh, and on the villages of Shosh and Mkhitarashen in the Askeran region of Artsakh. The roof of a house in Stepanakert was damaged as a result. Unfortunately, such provocations and violations of the ceasefire are no longer isolated instances. In the light of the statements by the Azerbaijani President threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia, and also bearing in mind the ongoing State-run campaign of anti-Armenian hate propaganda in Azerbaijan, these developments are particularly alarming.

Mr. Chairperson,

Almost six months after the end of the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan with the direct support and involvement of Turkey and Turkish-backed foreign terrorist fighters, the situation regarding the Armenian prisoners of war and other detainees remains unresolved, since Azerbaijan continues to blatantly disregard its obligations under both the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020 and international humanitarian law. The ongoing detention of Armenian prisoners of war and other captives in Azerbaijan poses a direct existential threat to the life and safety of our compatriots. Just two days ago, we learned of the death of 18-year-old Erik Mkhitarian, whose remains had been discovered and subsequently identified using a DNA test. He was killed in Azerbaijani captivity after the cessation of the military hostilities. On 24 November, Erik was still alive, as evidenced by video footage disseminated by Azerbaijani users on social media that day. His name was on the list of 23 prisoners of war and detainees submitted by Armenia to the European Court of Human Rights. The fact that Erik was killed more than two weeks after the signing of the trilateral statement reinforces our constantly voiced concerns and fear for the lives of other prisoners of war and detainees. This is already the second barbaric murder of a prisoner of war to have been confirmed. The first was the murder of Arsen Gharakhanyan, who was tortured and shot while in Azerbaijani captivity. These extrajudicial killings suggest that the chances of survival of any Armenian in Azerbaijani captivity are minimal. Nor do they inspire one with confidence about the lives of Armenians under the rule of the Azerbaijani authorities being protected.

Mr. Chairperson,

This current issue was introduced by my delegation as a result of the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan and supported by Turkey. Its title is descriptive and encapsulates the illegal and aggressive actions of both Azerbaijan and Turkey. In their public statements, various Turkish officials – including officials at the highest level – have openly acknowledged Turkey’s unconditional support for this war of aggression. The latest such acknowledgement came from the outgoing Turkish Ambassador to Azerbaijan, who said that their two countries had “accomplished everything together”, including the so-called “liberation of Karabakh”. Turkey’s involvement in the latter is substantiated by a great deal of irrefutable evidence, including evidence from Turkish sources, and does not need to be proved any further.

Such behaviour on Turkey’s part comes as no surprise, given that Turkish hostility towards Armenia and the Armenians goes back to the times of the Ottoman Empire.

Mr. Chairperson,

In two days’ time, Armenians across the whole world, together with all of progressive humankind, will mark the 106th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, as a result of which 1.5 million Armenians, including women, children and elderly people, were slaughtered or sent on death marches into the Syrian desert. We lament the fact that, even after 106 years, the consistent denial of this crime against humanity remains Turkish State policy.

Descendants of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide from all over the world have for years been struggling for international recognition of this heinous crime, overcoming the aggressive resistance of Turkish denialism.

This denialism has become an easily recognizable “trademark”, having evolved from claims that “nothing happened” into an attitude to the effect that “something did happen, but Turkey has nothing to do with it”. More recently, Turkey’s leadership has resorted to the approach of blaming the victims by saying that they “deserved” it and that, if necessary, Turkey would “do it again”. Genocide denied is genocide repeated.

Turkey nowadays often tries to justify the Armenian Genocide by invoking the turmoil of the First World War, arguing that the deportation of Armenians was necessary because their presence near the front lines posed a threat to national security. However, this assertion does not withstand scrutiny. The story of Sargis Torossian, a Turkish officer of Armenian descent whose family was deported and brutally killed while he was fighting heroically in the ranks of the Turkish Army defending Gallipoli, clearly demonstrates – like the stories of so many other Armenians – the ethno-racial and genocidal nature of this crime.

Mr. Chairperson,

Alongside its armed forces, Ottoman Turkey employed various marauding bands to carry out the Armenian Genocide.

In our own times, Turkey has been recruiting and transferring foreign terrorist fighters, who together with the Azerbaijani armed forces carried out numerous crimes against humanity during the war of aggression against Artsakh and its population last year.

Azerbaijan has clearly become a repository of this centuries-old anti-Armenian hatred and xenophobic sentiment, the manifestations of which are becoming more and more irrational and aggressive with each passing day.

It is symptomatic that during the so-called “victory parade” organized by Azerbaijan and Turkey to celebrate the war of aggression waged against Artsakh by the triple alliance of Azerbaijan, Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists, the Turkish President paid tribute to the words and actions of Enver Pasha, the war minister of the Ottoman Empire and one of the masterminds of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Moreover, that person also led the invasion into the South Caucasus by the so-called Turkish Islamic Army of the Caucasus and was responsible for the massacres and atrocities committed against Armenians in Baku and Artsakh in 1918. Even after 106 years, the tactics and poisonous mindset of those in power in Turkey have unfortunately not changed one whit.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Turkish delegation keeps repeating the same narratives, blaming my delegation for “the continuation of poisonous discourse and enmity here in the OSCE”. They claim that “new approaches are needed”, and that “now there is a real chance for peace”. These are no more than empty, claims and misleading phrases given the belligerent and aggressive rhetoric of the President of Azerbaijan.

On the eve of the 106th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, President Aliyev has made an outrageous statement in clear defiance of international law and his country’s OSCE commitments. In a televised interview, he said in particular: “The creation of the Zangazur corridor fully corresponds to our future national and historical interests. We are implementing the Zangazur corridor, whether Armenia likes it or not. If they do, it will be easier for us to implement, if not, we will implement it by force. Just as before and during the war, I said that they must get out of our lands or we will expel them by force. And so, it happened. The same will apply to the Zangazur corridor.”

It is highly regrettable to note that this egregious and threat to the territorial integrity of Armenia, which, moreover, contains a clear statement of intention to use force, did not elicit an appropriate reaction from the OSCE – the world’s largest regional security organization – or from those who set themselves up as zealous guardians and unwavering champions of the concept of comprehensive, inclusive and co-operative security and the Helsinki Final Act.

Distinguished colleagues,

If Turkey were sincere in its statements about striving for peace in the region, then, first of all, it should have brought its influence to bear on Azerbaijan to stop the killing and the inhuman and degrading treatment of Armenian prisoners of war and other detainees, and to facilitate their release and repatriation. It should have curbed the aggressive rhetoric coming from Baku or at the very least issued a friendly rebuke. It should have explained to

the dictatorial regime in Baku that the so-called “Military Trophies Park” with its mannequins of fallen Armenian soldiers is a shameful and disgraceful manifestation of hatred and intolerance that has no place in the twenty-first century – or, if nothing else, that it makes a mockery of the propaganda campaign on which Azerbaijan is spending billions of dollars in an attempt to portray itself as a peace-loving and responsible member of the civilized world.

Mr. Chairperson,

The current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is the result of a flagrant violation by Azerbaijan of several core principles of the Helsinki Final Act, namely refraining from the threat or use of force; peaceful settlement of disputes; equal rights and self-determination of peoples; and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. No one should be under any illusion that the results of the use of force, accompanied by war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law, can ever become the basis for a lasting and sustainable peace. Such a peace can only be achieved in the region through a comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which must include determining the status of Artsakh on the basis of the realization by the people of Artsakh of its inalienable right to self-determination, ensuring the safe and dignified return of the recently displaced population to their homes, and preserving the cultural and religious heritage of the region.

Mr. Chairperson,

I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of today’s meeting.

Thank you.



1310th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1310, Agenda item 3(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We see that the Armenian delegation is insisting on pursuing a policy based on disinformation, distortion and deception. It is hybrid in nature. Needless to say, we reject all allegations repeated today in the hate speech slot. We regret the continuation of poisonous discourse and enmity here in the OSCE. The representatives of the Government of Armenia have not shown any indication of any change – not even following the significant developments after 10 November.

However, new approaches are needed. Now there is a real chance for peace. For that, we need the Government of Armenia to change course towards Turkey. It is Armenia and the Armenian people that will benefit most from the stability and economic development in the region. Positive steps by Armenia will be reciprocated by Turkey.

Having said that, I will be brief regarding the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Armenia.

I believe that it is far from fitting to take advantage of Permanent Council meetings for injecting controversial and strongly disputed claims regarding the events of 1915.

I would like to remind that genocide is not a generic term that can be used for all tragic events. There are specific prerequisites none of which apply to the events of 1915.

Historical events with different memories and conflicting interpretations can only be appraised in a sound manner by jointly tackling them – and not through the imposition of one's memory on the other.

Not only the Armenians but also millions of Muslims perished or exiled in the years 1911 to 1923 that witnessed an unprecedentedly painful disintegration of the Ottoman Empire as all parts of it had become the theatres of war.

The Ottoman Empire was a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society reflective of the empires of the time. During the dismantling of the Empire, Muslims, Turks, Armenians and

other nationalities of the Empire suffered immensely. Almost five million Turks and Muslims were murdered, as the historians stated.

The position of Turkey has always been sound and clear, one that is based on empathy and dialogue.

Turkey's efforts are aimed at reaching a shared narrative that will be based on a just and objective memory.

Historical events can only be discussed by impartial, independent and competent historians.

In 2005, Turkey proposed the establishment of a fact-finding joint historical commission between Turkey and Armenia that would study 1915 events. So far, no answer from the Armenian side has been received.

We show respect to and commemorate Armenians who lost their lives during the First World War and offer condolences to their descendants. The deceased Armenians are officially remembered at religious ceremonies in Turkey. We label it as a historical and humane duty to uphold the memory of Ottoman Armenians and Armenian cultural heritage.

As President Erdoğan pointed out in his various messages to the Religious Ceremony held at the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul on 24 April:

“It is our common objective for these two peoples, who have shared the grief and happiness of centuries, to heal the wounds of the past and strengthen people-to-people ties.

“We will never give up working for amity and peace against those who try to politicize history through a bitter rhetoric of hate and enmity and strive to alienate the two neighbouring nations, who are bound with their common history and their similar traditions.”

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

Thank you.



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

PC.JOUR/1310
22 April 2021
Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

1310th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1310, Agenda item 3(c)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF LATVIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

First and foremost, I should like once again to reiterate Latvia's strong and unwavering respect for freedom of the media, freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. This remains unchanged – as does our respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in general, including the right to due process.

There are no repressive policies whatsoever in Latvia targeting media outlets that disseminate information in languages other than Latvian. Every single action taken by any institution in Latvia, including the institutions just mentioned by the Russian delegation, is based on national legislation, which in turn is wholly in line with international law and standards regarding, *inter alia*, freedom of the media, freedom of expression and due process.

While each and every case being considered by our institutions and involving media or journalists has its own unique circumstances, none of them has anything to do with the language in which the media outlets or journalists in question publish or broadcast, or with their political or geographical affiliation or even fight against disinformation. All the decisions made are legitimate and proportionate and subject to judicial review.

As for the Russian delegation's reference to interrogation of five journalists working for "Sputnik" and "Baltnews" by the Latvian State Security Service, on 14 April 2021, you can infer from the information given in the Russian delegation's statement that due process was observed throughout. The Russian delegation cited Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/18 on the safety of journalists, stating that "undue restrictive measures against journalists" cannot be used. There was nothing of the sort on this occasion either. No undue restrictive measures were applied during and after the interrogation, and the journalists have been duly released. With regard to the legal basis of that case, the Latvian State Security Service is the law enforcement agency responsible for investigating possible violations of international and national sanctions regimes that are in force in Latvia. However, only the court taking up a specific case – assuming that the case does reach that stage – can and will decide on the penalties, if any, that are to be imposed. Both the principle of checks and balances and the independence of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary are strictly observed in Latvia. Moreover, Latvia complies fully with its obligations under international law, including sanctions law, and with the commitments it has adopted under the aegis of the

various international organizations of which it is a member, including commitments on freedom of expression and due process.

Whereas the interrogation of the aforementioned journalists from “Sputnik” and “Baltnews” was based on Latvian national legislation on sanctions, which scrupulous review by international organizations has found to be in line with international standards relating to media freedom and sanctions law, we remain deeply concerned about the reasons and legal basis for the detention and interrogation of the Russian journalist Roman Anin in Moscow on 9 April 2021. Mr. Anin is the editor-in-chief of “iStories”, an independent investigative media outlet that, like several others, has moved its office and administrative staff to Latvia owing to concerns over security and freedom of the media in Russia.

The Russian delegation also mentioned once again the case from December last year that was extensively addressed by our delegation at the Permanent Council’s meeting of 10 December 2020. Just to recap the main points from our statement on that occasion (PC.DEL/1742/20):

- The actions undertaken by Latvia’s security bodies were related solely to a likely violation of sanctions imposed by the European Union;
- These actions were authorized by the court; and
- The individuals under investigation were not detained.

As for the decision taken last month by the National Electronic Mass Media Council (NEPLP) on the “Russia Today” website’s retransmission of Russian television channels in Latvia, their retransmission has been suspended until 18 June 2021, that is, for three months. The NEPLP warned “Russia Today” already in February this year that its website was retransmitting certain television channels illegally, that is, without a valid licence. Russia Today was given 15 days in which to either apply for a licence or to stop retransmitting those channels. Since the warning was ignored and neither of the aforementioned options was pursued by “Russia Today”, the NEPLP took the steps provided for in the law and suspended the illegal retransmission of those channels in Latvia from the “Russia Today” website. However, as I mentioned earlier, that website has only been suspended temporarily. There is nothing to stop “Russia Today” from complying with our national media legislation and applying for a licence so that it can legally retransmit these television channels on Latvian territory. All of the OSCE participating States have a licensing policy, as far as I know, and in each case the same policy is applicable to all media regardless of language or origin. The decision taken by the NEPLP on 18 March 2021 was subject to judicial review. I have no information about “Russia Today” having availed itself of its statutory right to appeal against that decision in a court of law – something that it was entitled to do within one month after the adoption of the decision.

Just as in the case that the Russian delegation brought up at the Permanent Council on 11 February 2021, and on which our delegation commented exhaustively then (PC.DEL/202/21), licensing policy and laws were once again disregarded. If there is a trend that we can see regarding media in Latvia, then that is the trend whereby certain media outlets – incidentally the same ones that are regularly mentioned by the Russian delegation at Permanent Council meetings – fail to apply for licences to broadcast programmes legally in

Latvian territory, do not pay heed to the warnings and exhortations to abide by the law issued by the NEPLP, and do not even make use of their right to appeal against the decisions taken in court. It would seem that this malpractice is continued so as to give the Russian Federation a pretext for diverting attention from problems with freedom of the media and the safety of journalists on its own territory by unsuccessfully trying to point to such issues in Latvia.

As for these attempts, in February 2021 alone, the volume of disinformation against Latvia spread by the Kremlin-affiliated media increased by 98 per cent compared with the preceding month. The independent technology think-tank and NGO “Debunk EU” detected 466 articles spreading disinformation about Latvia allegedly being a country that violates human rights and interferes in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries. In other words, 40 per cent of the Kremlin-affiliated media content on Latvia investigated by “Debunk EU” was pure disinformation.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like once again to recall some relevant numbers and facts.

- Out of around 370 television programmes in Latvia, some 50 are available in Latvian, more than 200 in Russian, approximately 190 in English, around 20 in Ukrainian and 3 in Belarusian and so on. And that is not counting the printed press and radio. That should suffice to illustrate the extent of media pluralism in Latvia.
- Latvia, which in the 2021 World Press Freedom Index retained its ranking (being placed 22nd as in 2020), keeps offering shelter to journalists and media outlets fleeing their home countries owing to security concerns and restrictions on freedom of the media there – in particular those who are fleeing from the country that occupies 150th place on that same index: the Russian Federation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Latvia remains committed to all its obligations under international law regarding freedom of the media, freedom of expression, the safety of journalists and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to due process, and it is constantly ensured that all the international standards in these areas are duly applied.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I kindly ask you to attach my statement to the journal of the day.



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

PC.JOUR/1310
22 April 2021
Annex 4

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

1310th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1310, Agenda item 3(f)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY**

Mr. Chairperson,

Germany fully aligns itself with the comments by the European Union.

However, since my Russian colleague mentioned Germany in his statement, I should like to exercise my right of reply.

I have already provided information here in the Permanent Council on several occasions regarding the requests for assistance that Russia addressed to Germany in the case of the poisoning of Mr. Navalny. Germany has responded to these requests for assistance in accordance with the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters. I refer to my previous statements in that connection.

May I remind my Russian colleague of the following facts: Mr. Navalny was treated in Omsk, in Russia, where he presented with symptoms of having been poisoned. The German Government subsequently made it possible for him to be transferred to Germany on humanitarian grounds. The hospital administering treatment, the Charité in Berlin, which my Russian colleague mentioned in his statement, asked specialist toxicologists to examine various samples taken from Mr. Navalny. These specialists from the German armed forces (Bundeswehr) reached a clear conclusion: Mr. Navalny was the victim of a crime, namely of an attack involving a chemical nerve agent from the Novichok group. There is unequivocal proof of the presence of this poison in the samples.

The insinuation against Germany, as presented by my Russian colleague just here in the Permanent Council, has no basis whatsoever.

I can only interpret the making of such unsubstantiated allegations in the Permanent Council as an attempt by my Russian colleague to distract from the real issue – the criticism of the conditions of Mr. Navalny's detention. Adequate medical care and treatment should also be a matter of course in detention.

Furthermore, it remains the case that Mr. Navalny must be released immediately and without any conditions. We expect Russia to comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention

and clarify the circumstances of the chemical weapons attack against Mr. Navalny on Russian soil. We cannot accept that the victim of a chemical weapons attack is behind bars because of an arbitrary verdict but that the perpetrators of this attack are not being prosecuted.

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