

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/1196/19
1 November 2019

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. VLADIMIR ZHEGLOV,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1245th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 October 2019

**In response to the address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,
Mr. George Tsereteli**

Mr. Tsereteli,

We have listened attentively to your address and would like to share our vision of key aspects of the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA).

The Assembly's most urgent task is to improve its relevance as a platform for mutually respectful dialogue with a view to reconciling the positions of participating States on the most pressing security and co-operation issues. However, as the Luxembourg session showed, the level of confrontational rhetoric is not decreasing. Moreover, the final declaration was adopted without a quorum by just one third of the members of the OSCE PA, contrary to the Rules of Procedure, which clearly state: "Decisions in the Assembly ... can only be taken when a majority of Members are present." Naturally, the Russian delegation stated that it did not consider itself bound by this document, which was devoid of any force.

Instead of debating obviously confrontational subjects, the Assembly should concentrate on considering joint responses to common challenges such as combating international terrorism, illegal migration, trafficking in human beings and corruption. There is a long overdue need to address the issue of economic connectivity and the alignment of integration processes in the OSCE area and to follow up the initiative to hold a pilot pan-European parliamentary forum to discuss this topic.

The migration crisis and security in the Mediterranean deserve further consideration. Their relevance was confirmed at the Assembly's Autumn Meeting in Marrakech. We support further co-operation with the OSCE Mediterranean Partners in line with the Declaration on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean adopted at the 2018 Ministerial Council meeting in Milan.

We call on the Assembly to pay more attention to combating Christianophobia and Islamophobia and also to the preservation of traditional and family values. It is important to respond in a timely manner to violations of linguistic, educational and religious rights.

Significant changes in its regulations would enable the Assembly to work more effectively. We are convinced of the need to change the Rules of Procedure, in particular by prohibiting the submission of draft

resolutions aimed against individual countries. The nefarious practice of using the Assembly to make unfounded accusations and inflame hysteria in connection with sovereign participating States should not be allowed to continue. This tactic clearly undermines attempts to restore trust and establish constructive co-operation.

It is imperative to change the procedure for adopting OSCE PA documents. It is unacceptable for them to be approved by a minority and then to be presented as a “reflection of the will of the entire Assembly”. To remedy this unacceptable situation, the Rules of Procedure need to be amended to guarantee that Assembly documents are approved by a majority of its members. The possibility of digitalizing the vote counting procedure and determining the quorum also needs to be explored. These proposals were put forward by the Russian parliamentary delegation at the OSCE PA in Marrakech. We trust that the Assembly’s leadership will give them positive consideration.

Mr. Tsereteli,

You have paid much attention to the crises in the OSCE area, particularly in Ukraine. The Parliamentary Assembly can contribute to its settlement, but to do so it must adopt a neutral position. In order to form an objective picture of what is happening in eastern Ukraine, representatives of the Assembly should first visit certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. As far as we know, such plans existed but were not implemented. Apparently, there are those who would much prefer that members of the Assembly did not find out the real situation on the ground, the difficulties of the population, and the destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure. Is it not reasonable to ask how the members of the OSCE PA can discuss documents on this topic without having seen the situation in Donbas with their own eyes?

And where is the reaction by the Assembly leadership to the tricks of the Ukrainian nationalists to disrupt the disengagement of forces and hardware at the line of contact? Nor did it notice the neo-Nazi marches in Ukrainian cities on 14 October to coincide with the date of the creation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. I would remind you that the members of this group were best remembered for the atrocities they committed against the civilian population of various nationalities during the Second World War. Nor do we hear any reactions to the most flagrant violations of linguistic and educational rights in Ukraine, which have intensified since the adoption of the odious laws on the State language and on education.

We should also like to comment on the statements by the representatives of Georgia and the United States of America about some kind of “occupation of parts of Georgia”. For some reason, they fail to state that it was Saakashvili’s regime that committed aggression against the South Ossetian people in August 2008. The current upsurge in tension at the border of Georgia and South Ossetia is a result of the decision by the Georgian authorities to establish a Georgian police post at the end of August in the immediate vicinity of the South Ossetian village of Tsnelis. This provocative step forced the South Ossetian authorities to take retaliatory measures, including the construction of its own checkpoint and the temporary closure of the border with Georgia. In order to normalize the situation, Georgia should demarcate the border in the manner agreed with the South Ossetian authorities. This will help to avoid a recurrence of tension in the border region and ensure uninterrupted border crossing.

We hope, Mr. Tsereteli, that you will pay attention to these objective remarks.

Thank you for your attention.