

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/189/26
26 February 2026

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1555th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 February 2026

**In response to the address by the President of the Committee of Ministers of the
Council of Europe, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Moldova, H.E. Mr. Mihai Popșoi**

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian Federation joined the Council of Europe in 1996, seeing in that organization a potential human rights bulwark and legal pillar for a “greater Europe” stretching from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic. It was a conscious choice at the time in favour of constructing a pan-European legal space. Today’s Council of Europe, alas, has nothing to do with the realization of such a goal. As a result of the aspirations of certain member States, it has completely repudiated its original calling to be an independent “guardian” of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Having listened to Mr. Popșoi’s statement and observed the course of today’s discussion in this room, I will say frankly that the resulting impression is as if the Council of Europe had set itself the task of confirming on a daily basis the correctness of our decision, adopted in March 2022, to terminate the Russian Federation’s membership of that organization. It is striking how quickly and, it would seem, irrevocably the Council of Europe has lost its independence and former credibility. Western elites have turned that regional organization into a pliant tool for promoting the notorious “rules-based world order” and advancing a politicized agenda that has nothing to do with international law or the interests of ordinary Europeans. By taking this course, the Council of Europe has deliberately jettisoned a unifying agenda, opting instead to create new dividing lines in Europe. As a result, the organization’s value is debased and interest in it is rapidly waning. The example of the Council of Europe vividly demonstrates what multilateral mechanisms can degenerate into when they are used exclusively to promote the narrow interests of certain countries or their associations to the din of propagandistic slogans based on a one-sided interpretation of complex inter-State disagreements.

A striking manifestation of this approach is the striving by certain member States of the Council of Europe to ram through a decision on welcoming Kosovo into the organization as a full member, thereby achieving indirect recognition of the independence of that Serbian territory. Another example we may cite is the persistent refusal to give an objective assessment of what is happening in Ukraine, of the genesis of the

conflict that has flared up there and its root causes, which have long been stubbornly swept under the carpet in Strasbourg's Palais de l'Europe.

Today we are witnessing the logical finale of the decline and fall of the Council of Europe. Throwing its unconditional support behind the criminal authorities in Kyiv, the Strasbourg bureaucracy has launched a large-scale Russophobic campaign. It is trying to carve out a special role for itself in creating mechanisms to hold our country "accountable" and inventing justifications for attempts to seize Russian assets and property. Their *raison d'être* is absurd, namely to review claims brought by Zelenskyy and his sidekicks against the Russian Federation for the fact that we protected Russian people from extermination, acting in full accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Having lost its constructive and unifying potential, the Council of Europe is attempting to acquire a new identity solely on the basis of confrontation with Russia.

The Council of Europe systematically caters to the promotion of neoliberal dogmas. At bottom, anyone who refuses to conform to that logic is automatically declared a "target". Anyone present here who should dare to stand up for national sovereignty and the interests of his or her citizens may, under certain circumstances, become the next in line to be "condemned" by the Strasbourg bureaucratic machine. History teaches us that such precedents tend to boomerang back at those who set them. It is in this light that we view the recent move by the Western majority in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to impose as "dialogue partners from Russia" figures who carry no socio-political weight and who openly tout extremist opinions.

As regards the pseudo-legal constructs being promoted under the auspices of the Council of Europe in connection with the Ukrainian crisis, the Russian Federation's position remains unchanged.

We will under no circumstances ever recognize the legitimacy of mechanisms for securing so-called accountability in the context of the events in Ukraine. We are obliged to reiterate what we have already said many times: the legally null and void mechanisms that the Council of Europe is fostering are contrary to the norms of international law. We consider them to be an element of the "hybrid" aggression against our country, a method of settling political scores and a means of obtaining undue financial gain. By creating such mechanisms, a handful of countries are attempting to arrogate to themselves the right to confiscate the property of those they dislike, acting in the worst traditions of the colonial past, when the prosperity of the Western metropolises – which, by a strange coincidence, are the main "players" in today's Council of Europe – was built on despoiling other peoples. Any encroachment on Russian Federation assets under pretexts such as "compensation" or "reparations" gives us free rein to take retaliatory measures, including asymmetrical ones. This lawlessness will cost its instigators dear, and the consequences of such a step will not be long in coming.

Secondly, we also regard the anti-Russian activities of the Council of Europe as clumsy attempts to deflect attention from the alarming human rights situation in European countries. In particular, over in Strasbourg they are stubbornly ignoring issues that are inconvenient for the Western political agenda, to wit the appalling nature of human rights curtailments in Ukraine, Moldova and the Baltic States, and also the ever greater straying from democratic principles in Western Europe, which is imposing military censorship in the media and stifling political pluralism.

Thirdly, in Ukraine and in Russian constitutional territory that is under temporary Ukrainian occupation a large number of crimes are being committed by, *inter alia*, mercenary fighters from member States of the Council of Europe and other countries. Crimes that are being deliberately hushed up for political reasons both in this room and within the walls of the Council of Europe. We would remind you that the investigative and judicial authorities of the Russian Federation are engaged in comprehensive work to

gather and document verified facts and hold the perpetrators accountable. All those involved in such crimes will be duly punished. Sooner or later. Irrespective of their national affiliation or citizenship.

While Russia, the United States of America and several other countries are endeavouring to find a diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis, those in the Council of Europe and their minions are consistently pursuing escalation. For what purpose? The answer is obvious: they seek to demonstrate that they are acting in tandem with the European Union, which has long been calling the shots at the decaying Council of Europe. We can see that the Council of Europe is actively striving for propagandistic effect. The “anti-Russia” project in Ukraine is failing, and Western elites need to convince their own populations that the billions injected into it by way of life support are justified.

Fourthly, Russia completely rejects any attempts to use multilateral institutions to promote confrontational approaches and decisions on the most pressing issues on the international agenda. This also applies in full measure to the process for achieving a settlement in Kosovo, which must be pursued in accordance with the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244, unconditionally taking into account the interests of the Serb population living in Kosovo and Metohija, along with the position of Serbia.

Today, to our deep regret, we see no signs whatsoever that the Council of Europe is prepared to assess the current realities objectively and return to constructive work in the interests of the rank-and-file citizens of its member States. Instead, we are faced with endless Russophobia and attempts to curry favour with the Brussels bloc. And this is a miserable end for a once respected pan-European organization.

Thank you for your attention.