
Chairmanship: Finland

1546th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. Date: Thursday, 18 December 2025 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.
Closed: 1.05 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador V. Häkkinen
Ms. M. Neuvonen

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson, a number of delegations and the Representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly offered their condolences and expressed their support to the United States of America in connection with the shooting incident that occurred at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, on 13 December 2025, and to Australia (Partner for Co-operation) in connection with the terrorist attack that occurred at Bondi Beach, Sydney, on 14 December 2025 (PC.DEL/1366/25 OSCE+). The United States of America (PC.DEL/1345/25) and Australia (Partner for Co-operation) (PC.DEL/1349/25 OSCE+) thanked them for their expression of sympathy and support.

Russian Federation (Annex 1)

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

Agenda item 1: THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

Chairperson, Ukraine (PC.DEL/1370/25), United Kingdom, Canada (PC.DEL/1356/25), Denmark (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine) (PC.DEL/1358/25 OSCE+), Türkiye, Norway, Russian Federation

Agenda item 2: DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT A
DECISION ON THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT
MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Chairperson

Decision: The Permanent Council adopted Decision No. 1515 (PC.DEC/1515) on the recommendation to adopt a decision on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Chairperson, Switzerland (interpretative statement, see the attachment to the decision)

Agenda item 3: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

(a) *Increasing military involvement of certain NATO and EU member States in yet more confrontation in and around Ukraine:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1348/25)

(b) *The Russian Federation's hybrid activities in the OSCE region:* United Kingdom, Denmark-European Union (with Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1346/25), Germany (PC.DEL/1354/25 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/1371/25), Latvia (PC.DEL/1365/25 OSCE+), Czechia (PC.DEL/1360/25 OSCE+), Canada (PC.DEL/1357/25 OSCE+), Romania, Italy (PC.DEL/1364/25 OSCE+), Moldova, Estonia, Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Russian Federation, Chairperson

Point of order: Lithuania

(c) *Great Britain's genuine hybrid activities in the OSCE region:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1361/25), United Kingdom

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

(a) *Follow-up on the feedback received on the Helsinki+50 discussions on the future of the OSCE:* Chairperson

(b) *Possible meetings to be held during the winter recess from 22 December 2025 to 9 January 2026:* Chairperson

(c) *Criteria used to select the meeting format for the discussion of a particular topic:* Russian Federation (Annex 2)

Agenda item 5: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of a written report of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/143/25 OSCE+):* Representative of the Secretary General
- (b) *Closure of the Minsk Process, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, and the High-Level Planning Group (MC.GAL/17/25 Restr.):* Representative of the Secretary General

Agenda item 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Convention establishing an International Claims Commission for Ukraine, adopted in The Hague on 16 December 2025:* Netherlands (PC.DEL/1359/25 OSCE+), Denmark (also on behalf of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden), Sweden, Ukraine (PC.DEL/1372/25 OSCE+), Georgia (PC.DEL/1363/25 OSCE+), Moldova, United Kingdom, Russian Federation, Lithuania
- (b) *International Day of Neutrality, observed on 12 December 2025:* Turkmenistan
- (c) *Response to a statement delivered on “Human Rights Day, observed on 10 December 2025”, under agenda item 3, “Review of Current Issues”, at the 1545th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council, held on 11 December 2025:* Serbia
- (d) *OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism: Addressing Challenges of Intolerance and Discrimination, to be held on 9 and 10 February 2026 in St. Gallen, Switzerland:* Switzerland

4. Next meeting:

To be announced



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

PC.JOUR/1546
18 December 2025
Annex 1

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

1546th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1546, Point 2

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

It remains deeply disappointing that the Finnish Chairmanship is openly violating the rules of our Organization and wilfully continuing the fruitless discussions of the Ukraine topic at an OSCE decision-making body. The inclusion of a separate confrontational item on “Russian aggression against Ukraine” in the Permanent Council’s agenda is quite unacceptable.

Such actions are directly incompatible with standing agenda items as established by the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE (chapter IV.1(C)) and must stop. The agenda circulated by the Chairmanship for today’s meeting has an overtly aggressive thrust as regards the Ukraine issue, is incompatible with the principles of the OSCE and does not give all participating States the opportunity to take part on an equal and non-discriminatory basis in a discussion of the developments in and around Ukraine.

The convening of Permanent Council meetings must be fully in line with the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE by involving consultations with all the participating States (paragraphs IV.1(C)1 and IV.1(C)3) and may not run counter to the provisions of the mandate of the Chairmanship-in-Office, which unambiguously obligates the Chairmanship to take the whole spectrum of opinions into account in its actions (Porto Ministerial Council Decision No. 8 of 2002).

This is clearly an abuse of authority by the Chairmanship, which is duty-bound to act in the interests of all 57 participating States and not a group of countries that are aggressively imposing their views on everyone else.

We request that this formal reservation be reflected in the journal of today’s meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council in accordance with paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE.

Thank you for your attention.



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

PC.JOUR/1546
18 December 2025
Annex 2

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

1546th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1546, Agenda item 4(c)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

Unfortunately, we have not received any clear explanation from the Finnish Chairmanship-in-Office regarding the specific criteria it uses to select the format for discussing a particular topic: a Permanent Council meeting or a Preparatory Committee meeting. We cannot accept vague references to budgetary reasons.

One gets the impression that some people are trying to forget that our Organization operates on the basis of consensus. We call upon the incoming Swiss Chairmanship to reconsider this practice and to take such decisions only after consulting with all 57 participating States. Especially when it comes to such an important topic as freedom of religion. This issue is more relevant than ever in the OSCE area.

We have taken note of the reports by the Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office on combating intolerance and discrimination, Rabbi Andrew Baker, Ambassador Evren Akgün and Professor Wolfgang Palaver.

The Russian Federation attaches paramount importance to the issue of freedom of religion and to combating neo-Nazism, discrimination and xenophobia. We have consistently called for the effectiveness and visibility of such efforts to be enhanced. This is particularly relevant in view of the widespread violations of religious rights and freedoms in the OSCE area as a whole.

We are convinced that this topic should be comprehensively discussed in the Permanent Council, rather than in other limited formats, including Preparatory Committee meetings.

An absolutely unacceptable situation, which calls for the attention of all the Personal Representatives, has arisen notably in Ukraine. Ideas of racial superiority and various forms of xenophobia, neo-Nazism, discrimination against Christians and Muslims and anti-Semitism have become an everyday reality for the country.

We would remind you that, for many years, the Kyiv regime has been actively pursuing a course aimed at eliminating the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), discriminating against its clergy, persecuting ecclesiastics and worshippers and forcing parishioners to convert to the artificially created schismatic “Orthodox Church of Ukraine” (OCU). The country’s legislative system is being developed and the actions of various government and law enforcement agencies are being co-ordinated to this end.

The persecution of canonical Orthodoxy has been stepped up significantly since 2022. The Kyiv regime has undergone a political “mutation”. The conditions created by the introduction of martial law allowed a totalitarian system of government to be established in the country, characterized by an absolute monopoly on power, extrajudicial reprisals, total censorship and State propaganda, the *de facto* elimination of independent media and the destruction of the political opposition, and the active search for “traitors”, imaginary Russian spies and saboteurs.

A corresponding legislative framework has also been created and is being expanded with a view to eliminating the UOC. For example, the real purpose of the decision adopted by the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine on 1 December 2022 was to completely restrict the rights of UOC parishes. The decision approved a number of measures, including the development by the Cabinet of Ministers of a draft law banning the UOC; the ramping-up of pressure on the UOC by the Ukrainian intelligence services; the deprivation of the UOC’s right to use the churches of the oldest and largest monastery, the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra; and the introduction of so-called sanctions against UOC bishops.

The decision was approved by a decree of President Zelenskyy on the same day, 1 December, and his decrees of 11 and 20 December 2022 approved a list of “sanctions” against 14 UOC bishops. “Sanctions” mean a ban on any economic activity by a natural person and the *de facto* deprivation of their property on the territory of Ukraine.

According to the Security Service of Ukraine, since February 2022, a total of more than 100 criminal cases have been initiated against UOC ecclesiastics, more than 50 hierarchs and clerics have been served with judicial summonses, and dozens have been convicted. In addition, priests are being stripped of their citizenship for spreading “pro-Russian propaganda”.

The pinnacle of arbitrariness was reached on 20 August 2024, when the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) adopted Act No. 3894 on Protection of the Constitutional Order in Regard to the Activities of Religious Organizations, which created a legal mechanism for a complete ban on the UOC in Ukraine. The canonical church, whose parishioners number in the millions, is to be dismantled and its property confiscated if the country’s authorities conclude that it has affiliations with the Russian Orthodox Church. Given the lawlessness prevailing in Ukraine, it can be assumed that the Kyiv regime will seek out the slightest pretext and gather relevant “evidence” in order to finally destroy the UOC.

A key part of this law concerning the activities of religious organizations in Ukraine came into force in May 2025. In essence, the norm lays the groundwork for a legal ban on the activities of the UOC, as it grants the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience the right to file an administrative claim in court to ban a religious organization

if it is recognized as “affiliated” with the Russian Orthodox Church, whose activities have already been officially banned on the territory of Ukraine.

In addition to legislative measures, the Kyiv regime’s efforts include the forcible seizure of churches and monasteries, the illegal re-registration of parishes and the promotion of hate speech, unprovoked aggression and violence against UOC clergy and worshippers.

Since May 2022, the Security Service of Ukraine, in co-operation with other law enforcement agencies, has conducted thousands of searches in monasteries, churches and administrative buildings of UOC dioceses throughout Ukraine under the pretext of “counter-intelligence activities”.

Despite the massive scale of the searches, which encompassed all UOC dioceses, the evidence presented to the public was limited to theological and historical literature in Russian or fake propaganda leaflets. In some cases, materials were planted in the presence of the victims.

On the back of these illegal actions aimed at removing obstacles to the seizure of the UOC’s major holy sites, the authorities are subjecting UOC priests, as well as other hierarchs and clerics of the canonical church, to repression on spurious political grounds. In April 2024, head of the Security Service of Ukraine, Vasyl Malyuk, was quoted in the media as saying that 23 UOC priests had been arrested in Ukraine, 37 ecclesiastics had been charged, and criminal proceedings had been initiated against more than 80 ministers of the canonical church. According to him, the clergy are mainly charged with crimes such as inciting religious enmity and treason.

Just look at the show trial in Kyiv against Metropolitan Arseniy, abbot of the UOC’s Sviatohirsk Lavra, on trumped-up charges. On 15 December of this year, he was demonstratively brought to court in handcuffs as if he were a particularly dangerous criminal. The priest’s poor health is not being taken into account by his “tormentors”.

The local authorities are issuing recommendations or demands to UOC parishes that they convert to other denominations. Appeals by local government bodies (regional and city councils) to the Ukrainian leadership calling for a ban on the UOC are widespread. In a number of settlements in western Ukraine, the local authorities are forcibly closing churches, preventing worshippers from attending services and imposing “bans on the activities” of the UOC at the local level.

In some regions and settlements, agreements with UOC parishes on the use of historic churches or monasteries are being illegally terminated. Plots of land on which churches and cathedrals have already been built are being illegally confiscated from parishes, with these buildings subsequently being seized or worship services obstructed.

The authorities are continuing to carry out raid-like seizures of churches and redistribute the property of the UOC. All this is accompanied by physical violence against its clergy and parishioners, desecration of holy places and other illegal actions that go unpunished.

The seizure of churches using firearms is widespread. In addition to the militarized structures of the so-called territorial defence, the seizures are often supported by local authorities and law enforcement agencies, with members of other religious organizations taking an active part. Numerous “independent” looters and vandals justify their raids as an ideological struggle against the “occupiers” and their “spiritual accomplices”. Video footage of these actions is disseminated on social media in Ukraine with calls to follow these examples.

Pressure on the UOC’s largest monasteries has intensified.

In May 2022, the State-backed OCU created and registered a “parallel parish” of the UOC’s largest monastery – the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra – under the same name. In 2023, the State did not renew the agreement on the use of the two largest churches of the Lavra, which had been rebuilt and restored at the expense of the canonical Orthodox Church. Likewise, the long-term agreement that had been concluded with the UOC on the use of the rest of the Lavra’s buildings was terminated unilaterally and without legal grounds. Currently, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine is seeking to transfer all of the buildings to the State and evict the monastic community from the monastery. The monastery’s leadership and monks are being pressured to transfer to the rival OCU, which is demanding that the monastery buildings be handed over to it.

The decision by the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine of 1 December 2022 and the decree by President Zelenskyy of the same date provided legal grounds for the Ukrainian State’s efforts to withdraw the buildings of the UOC’s largest and oldest monastery – the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra – from the church’s use.

At the same time, a “parallel” parish of the second largest monastery in Ukraine – the UOC’s Pochaiv Lavra in the Ternopil region – has been created within the OCU. Representatives of the OCU are openly calling for the canonical Orthodox Church monks to be expelled from the Pochaiv monastery and the building itself to be handed over to the OCU. The local regional authorities are insisting on the expulsion of the UOC monks from the Pochaiv Lavra and the transfer of its buildings to the purview of the State museum. The Kyiv regime is known to be making efforts to seize other UOC monasteries, giving these actions the appearance of legality.

Hate speech against the UOC is being fostered by prominent politicians, the State leadership and regional officials. A massive media campaign is being waged against it in the State-run and privately-owned media, which has led to acts of vandalism and arson against places of worship and holy sites of the canonical Orthodox Church and to unprovoked violence and aggression towards its clerics and worshippers.

Throughout 2022 to 2025, hate speech against the UOC was heard in public remarks made by senior Ukrainian State officials, high-ranking government officials and politicians, senior executives from the intelligence services and law enforcement agencies, and prominent public and religious figures.

Journalists who regularly report on the Kyiv regime’s abuses against the canonical UOC are also being persecuted.

Detailed information on these egregious cases can be found, in particular, in the Russian Foreign Ministry reports circulated at the OSCE: the 2025 report “Regarding the situation with the glorification of Nazism and the spread of neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” and the 2025 report on “Illegal actions by the Kiev regime targeting the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), its clergy and parishioners”.

Against this backdrop, numerous statements continue to be published by local Orthodox churches and their hierarchs and by representatives of religious and civil circles around the world, expressing support for and solidarity with the UOC. On 16 December of this year, a large-scale rally in support of canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine was held in Washington, D.C., near the Capitol.

At the same time, the issue of canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine has still not been discussed at the OSCE. There is no dialogue. Why is there no reaction from the relevant OSCE executive structures and Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office? It is time to stop drawing a veil over this unacceptable situation and finally start responding to all cases of violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. This does not diminish the importance of other issues in the OSCE area either, most notably to the “west of Vienna”.

Mr. Chairperson,

The tasking from the 2014 OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Basel to draft declarations on countering Christianophobia and Islamophobia remains relevant. We hope that the incoming Swiss OSCE Chairmanship will provide the necessary impetus to continue work in this important area.

We call upon the Personal Representatives to fulfil their duties in a professional manner and to be guided by the commitments adopted by all the OSCE participating States without exception and without any politicization.

We request that the text of this statement be included in the journal of today’s meeting of the Permanent Council.

Thank you for your attention.



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

PC.DEC/1515
18 December 2025

Original: ENGLISH

1546th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1546, Agenda item 2

**DECISION No. 1515
RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT A DECISION ON THE
TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

The Permanent Council,

1. Requests the Chairperson of the Permanent Council to transmit to the Chairperson-in-Office the draft decision of the Ministerial Council on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council (MC.DD/1/25 of 25 June 2025);
2. Recommends to the Ministerial Council the adoption of this decision through a silence procedure with the period of silence expiring on 24 December 2025, at noon CET.

PC.DEC/1515
18 December 2025
Attachment

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Switzerland:

“Mr. Chairperson,

In connection with the Permanent Council decision on the recommendation to adopt a decision on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Switzerland would like to make the following interpretative statement under the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure.

Switzerland is finalizing its preparations to take over the OSCE Chairmanship in 2026. A key element in these preparations is the technical decisions that can be taken in advance to facilitate the efficient functioning of the Organization next year. The decision on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council is one of them.

One of Switzerland’s priorities is to foster inclusive dialogue with all participating States. The Ministerial Council meeting in Switzerland, to which all 57 participating States will be invited, will be an important event to that effect. We plan to hold it in the city of Lugano, and we want to ensure broad and inclusive participation. Switzerland takes its role as host State very seriously. It always does its utmost to ensure that all delegations can come to Switzerland to work under the best possible conditions.

Mr. Chairperson,

Switzerland is looking forward to organizing the Thirty-Third Meeting of the Ministerial Council in Lugano on 3 and 4 December 2026. Starting the preparatory work a year ahead will provide us with a meaningful time frame to achieve a well-organized event.

We request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and to the journal of today’s meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.”