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**STATEMENT BY
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1561st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 April 2026

In response to the report by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Braathu,

We have carefully studied the report on the work of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media that was presented to the Permanent Council. Against the backdrop of a serious deterioration of the international bodies dealing with the safety of media outlets and journalists, the OSCE, unfortunately, is no exception, as it suffers from a familiar one-sidedness and is ignoring a whole range of egregious cases involving the violation of journalists' rights and of the right of access to information. I should like to elaborate on this point.

Once again, we are compelled to draw attention to the absence in the report of any mention of the continuing practice (which is very much systematic) of exerting pressure on Russian journalists accredited in European countries, a practice that began long before 2022. Amid the West's ongoing hybrid aggression against Russia and its people, it falls to the lot of our own journalists to be among the first to refute the lies and fake stories about our country that are being spread on an industrial scale. Despite the walls of censorship being erected, they are managing to break through the information blockade, even in States with the most intolerant attitude towards any form of dissent. It is precisely for this reason that European countries continue to pursue a policy of relentless eradication of any manifestations of dissent. The various bans imposed by these countries, their revocation of accreditation and blocking of accounts, along with other forms of oppression of undesirable, primarily Russian, media outlets, have become an artificial barrier for these countries' inhabitants, preventing them from exercising their right to free access to information. They also constitute a flagrant violation of international obligations, including OSCE commitments, to safeguard freedom of expression and non-discriminatory access to information. As we have repeatedly pointed out, detailed evidence of all these abuses can be found under the heading "Foreign reprisals against Russian journalists and media" on one of the main pages of the Russian Foreign Ministry's website.

For the first time in a long while, the Representative's report mentions the destructive role of the EU restrictions imposed since 2022 on the work of Russian media outlets such as RT and Sputnik; however, framing this issue through the lens of the so-called aggression against Ukraine completely cancels out your otherwise commendable step towards objectivity and, by justifying EU actions, is further grist to the mill of

those who impose curtailments on journalists and media outlets. Furthermore, it is not only the European Union that suffers from this malady; the circle of prohibitive countries of this kind within the OSCE area is considerably wider. We suggest that you take things a step further and explore this topic in your subsequent reports.

Mr. Braathu,

Threats to the lives of media workers also persist. The date of 16 April this year marked 11 years since the Ukrainian writer and opposition journalist Oles Buzina was killed outside his home in Kyiv. He became one of the many victims of the criminal Kyiv regime because he posed a threat to it – he was publicly criticizing and exposing the true nature of the neo-Nazi forces that had seized power following the bloody coup d'état in Ukraine. He urged the then leadership of Ukraine to establish dialogue with the residents of Donbass and spoke of the need to enshrine the rights of the Russian language, which greatly annoyed the authorities in Kyiv. Despite the fact that, at the time, the United Nations Secretary-General, OSCE officials and many civil society organizations condemned the murder, offered their condolences to the victim's family and called for a thorough investigation, those who ordered the killing were never identified and the suspects were released. What is telling is that a few days before his death, the journalist's personal details, including his home address, appeared on the infamous extremist website Myrotvorets, which contains personal information on all public figures, opinion writers and reporters deemed undesirable by the Kyiv regime. Incidentally, this website is still operational, and its existence is stubbornly ignored both by the Kyiv regime's Western handlers and here at the OSCE. We hope that a reference to the criminal nature of this resource will nevertheless be included in the next specialized report.

Eleven years down the line, it is quite obvious that the situation regarding freedom of speech in Ukraine has deteriorated to the point where the entire information landscape and independent media outlets are being subjected to a complete purge. They have effectively been replaced by the notorious "Telemarathon", which broadcasts the Zelenskyy regime's Russophobic propaganda around the clock. Open season has been declared on undesirable journalists, primarily Russian ones, using every possible weapon, including unmanned aerial vehicles and precision-guided munitions. One can use the events of 2022 as much as one likes to try to justify the current situation in Ukraine, as illustrated by the report that has been presented, but the facts indicate that the rotten core of the authorities ensconced in Kyiv began to take shape following the coup d'état organized in 2014 at the instigation of Western countries, with the aim of creating an "anti-Russia" to replace our good neighbour. At the time, people turned a blind eye to this, and now we are all reaping the bitter fruits, including in the journalistic realm.

The year 2026 has already been marked by a series of attempts on the life of Russian media personnel by the Zelenskyy regime's "fighters". For example, in early April, Yevgeny Bykovsky, a correspondent for the newspaper *Izvestia*, was injured as a result of a targeted attack by a combat drone belonging to the Ukrainian armed forces. You will find no mention of this incident in Western reports or on the social media accounts of relevant high-ranking officials, which once again highlights the partisanship of international bodies that are supposed to be standing up for the media but, in reality, often turn a blind eye to – and even cover up – the Kyiv regime's crimes.

This bias was also exposed in a report by the Russian Union of Journalists, which decided to look into the activities of the Committee to Protect Journalists, a pro-Western human rights NGO focused on the media. Its latest report makes no mention of the deaths, in 2025, of *Izvestia* correspondent Alexander Martemyanov, journalist Alexander Fedorchak, cameraman Andrey Panov, camera crew driver Alexander Sirkeli, Channel One correspondent Anna Prokofieva and RIA Novosti correspondent Ivan Zuev. All of them lost their lives in the line of duty. Their deaths were officially recognized by international organizations. This raises the question: do the relevant bodies apply the same criteria to all comparable cases

– regardless of the nationality of the deceased, their editorial affiliation and which side of the front line they were reporting from? As we can see – no, they do not. There is work to be done both in other international organizations and here at the OSCE.

You did not mention Yevgeny Bykovsky either, Mr. Braathu. We believe that your Office should strongly and unambiguously condemn such egregious cases.

Contrary to the claim in your report that Russia imposes restrictions on foreign journalists' activities, foreign correspondents in our country, including those from States with unfriendly governments, are able to work in accordance with Russian law and carry out their professional activities. Journalists are issued with visas and accreditation, and are invited to official events. One particular aspect highlighted in the report is foreign agent laws. We have commented on this issue many times during Permanent Council meetings and do not shy away from this topic, but, since it has been raised again in the report, we should like to briefly note that the essence of the relevant Russian laws is not to punish, not to force people to go through hell and back as our journalists are obliged to in other countries, but merely to warn our fellow citizens that media outlets providing them with information are receiving foreign funding and engaging in political activities. It is up to the readers, listeners and viewers themselves to decide whether to trust such media outlets and, if so, to what degree. Furthermore, a number of Western countries do not even attempt to conceal the fact that they have set themselves the task of interfering in our country's internal affairs, using the noble goals of promoting democracy and media freedom as a disguise for these efforts. Of course, ahead of significant electoral events, such external pressure intensifies. We have seen what this can ultimately lead to – for example, in Ukraine in 2014. The “tinder” for that fire was, of course, local, but it was kindled from outside. In view of this, Russia proactively adopted a range of legislative measures to minimize the possibility of foreign influence being exerted on our domestic political situation and extremist material being promoted.

Mr. Representative,

Your work cannot be easy at a time when journalists in the OSCE area are increasingly being turned into “infowar soldiers”, and censorship and repression of undesirable journalists and media outlets in a number of Western countries are being concealed under the fig leaf of safeguarding national security interests. We realize that you are under unprecedented pressure and that they also want to dragoon you into the trenches of information warfare. At the same time, we cannot fail to note your attempt to move towards a systematic cataloguing of a wide range of relevant issues that have long been consciously ignored by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and which we have been talking about for many years.

We are counting on media freedom issues to be covered in an appropriate and balanced manner (balanced in both political and geographical terms), in strict compliance with your existing mandate. For our part, we are ready to engage in good faith with the Office of the Representative on a broad range of relevant issues. The key to such co-operation will be your strict fulfilment of the mandate and an appropriate response to our well-founded concerns.

Thank you for your attention.