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PC.DEL/886/25
11 September 2025
ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1533rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 September 2025

**On further acts of discrimination against the Russian and Russian-speaking population
in the Republic of Estonia**

Madam Chairperson,

We are compelled once again to draw attention to Estonia's ongoing violations of its obligations and commitments in the area of democratic freedoms and human rights, including with regard to national minorities.

For many years, the Estonian authorities have been systematically pursuing a discriminatory policy aimed at eliminating the ethnic, linguistic and national diversity of their country's population. History is being cynically rewritten; everything that is, in some way or another, related to Russia is being "cancelled". The glorification of Nazis and their accomplices and the desecration of monuments to, and graves of, the liberating Red Army soldiers have become an everyday reality for that Baltic State.

We have already repeatedly pointed out the relentless attempts by the authorities there to purge the public arena of any alternative viewpoints. "Undesirable" journalists, activists and public figures are being targeted. The persecution of so-called non-citizens just keeps on intensifying.

Clearly inspired by the Kyiv regime's criminal practices, the Estonian authorities are continuing their war against canonical Orthodoxy. Everything is subordinated to the goal of outlawing the activities of the Estonian Orthodox Church. And it does not bother them that this runs counter to a number of Estonia's obligations under international law, including its OSCE commitments.

Now it is the Russian Cultural Centre in Tallinn that the authorities see as standing in their way as they strive for the "cancellation of all things Russian".

We would remind you that, in June 2025, the members of the Tallinn City Council adopted a high-profile decision on handing over the Russian Cultural Centre to a foundation of the Kultuurikatel (Creative Hub) called the Mere Cultural Centre. This "restructuring" was carried out under the specious pretext of "reducing duplication of similar types of activity" and supposedly streamlining costs. Moreover, these precipitous actions were undertaken without considering the opinions of the Russian-speaking

population. An open letter protesting such “arbitrariness” on the part of the authorities that was sent by the heads of 15 cultural associations based at the Russian Cultural Centre has also been ignored.

There are quite well-founded fears that such actions by the local authorities will lead to the banning of Russian-language clubs and divisions, and also to the shrinking of the cultural space available to the Russian and Russian-speaking population.

One wonders how the Russian Cultural Centre could possibly have come to be seen as “undesirable” by Estonia? After all, it is not just a concert and exhibition venue, but a haven for culture in the broadest sense, hosting major events since the 1990s, such as a Slavic song and dance festival, Days of Slavonic Literature, days celebrating the peoples of Estonia, and numerous singing and dancing festivals and competitions.

However, in the sick imagination of Russophobes everything takes on a different colour. These actions by the authorities in Tallinn are in keeping with the ongoing Estonianization of society and with the “cancel culture” directed against everything Russian. The same goes for the labelling of the Russian Cultural Centre as an alleged symbol of Soviet “occupation”, attaching discriminatory stigmas to it.

No substantive reaction is to be expected from the representatives of Estonia. Experience has shown that the Baltic States operate solely with false pretexts and shrill accusations about “Russian propaganda”.

We call upon OSCE officials to respond publicly, in line with their mandates, to the tightening of repression against the Russian and Russian-speaking population of Estonia and to take concrete steps aimed at stopping the discrimination against our compatriots.

We would also ask that our statement today be regarded as an official request addressed to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Christophe Kamp, and the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Maria Telalian.

Thank you for your attention.