

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/1173/25
30 October 2025

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE 1540th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

30 October 2025

In response to the report by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

High Commissioner Kamp,

We welcome you to the Permanent Council. Having carefully studied your report, we should like to share the following observations.

We note how you intend to engage in dialogue with the authorities in Kyiv on sensitive issues related to protecting the rights of national minorities. At the same time, we find ourselves unable to share your enthusiasm about “strengthen[ing] the capacities of Ukrainian institutions working on minority issues, including their ability to ... monitor the application of minority rights and to engage in meaningful and inclusive dialogue with minority communities” or about “putting a strong and inclusive legal and policy framework on national minority issues in place as part of ongoing reforms”.

We would be curious to know which reforms exactly you have in mind. And what kind of addressing of national minority issues is being referred to here? Behind the “strengthening” of relevant legislation in line with “international standards” we can see only a trampling underfoot of the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population. There has never actually been a reaction from your Office to the blatantly discriminatory nature of the legislative texts adopted in Ukraine, including the laws on national minorities, on the State language, on education, on the media and on the activities of religious organizations. Moreover, most of these laws were passed before 2022 and can in no way be chalked up to “the ongoing war against Ukraine”.

And what about the new draft law, submitted on 13 October 2025 for consideration by the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament), that provides for Russian and Moldovan to be removed from the list of languages subject to protection under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages? We have already taken up the microphone here to highlight the gist of that discriminatory initiative. Relevant detailed materials will be transmitted to you as soon as this Permanent Council meeting is over. We urge you to study them and also to take a principled public stand on the actions by Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s regime. It is impossible to ignore the way that the authorities in Kyiv are ratcheting up repression against their own population and attempting to destroy the identity of a series of ethnic groups. Hushing things up is merely further emboldening the Ukrainian neo-Nazis.

The situation regarding the autonomous region of Gagauzia continues to give cause for concern. One gets the impression that the authorities in Chişinău have simply decided to dismantle its autonomy. The most egregious manifestation of this policy line is the recent criminal prosecution of the Başkan (Governor) of Gagauzia, Evghenia Guţul, on spurious pretexts. The representatives of Moldova are trying to convince us that her case is not politically motivated. Nevertheless, this is not the only instance of pressure being exerted by the Moldovan authorities on a “recalcitrant” who expresses the interests of the Gagauz people. We would remind you that, despite having been elected in 2023 fully in accordance with democratic standards, the head of that region was never actually included among the members of the central cabinet as required by Moldovan law.

The prosecution of Ms. Guţul is just one element of broader repression against Gagauz political figures. In the midst of the election campaign, five members of the autonomous region’s Executive Committee, including Deputy Başkan Victor Petrov, were arrested without explanation. They were fined later on for having violated a 25-metre security zone around a court building, even though the police had not notified anyone in advance of the existence of such a security zone.

Furthermore, a ruling by the Constitutional Court of Moldova in April 2025 stripped Gagauzia of the right to appoint a chief prosecutor for the region. These actions fly in the face of the 1994 Act of the Republic of Moldova on the Special Legal Status of Gagauzia and are aimed at eroding its autonomy and subjugating it to the central authorities. They show how the regime in Chişinău actually goes about the task of addressing national and territorial issues. It is worth recalling that, apart from the Gagauz people, there is also a Bulgarian minority living in a particular area of Moldova. And that the Transnistrian conflict remains unresolved.

In that regard, we urge you, Mr. Kamp, to give your utmost attention to the situation as regards safeguarding the rights of national minorities in Moldova.

High Commissioner Kamp,

Your report, alas, also fails to bring up the aggressive policies pursued by the Baltic countries in terms of imposing the State language in each case and systematically depriving the Russian-speaking population of the right to study in their native tongue. Not to mention the banning of Russian media outlets, the way in which the public and political space is being purged of any dissent, the persecution directed against the Orthodox Church, the glorification of the Nazis and their accomplices, and the “war” being waged against monuments to, and graves of, the liberating Red Army soldiers.

In Estonia, for example, the Russian Cultural Centre in Tallinn was deemed by the authorities to stand in the way of the “cancellation of all things Russian” that they are pursuing. A “restructuring” was carried out under the specious pretext of “reducing duplication of similar types of activity” and supposedly streamlining costs. Moreover, these rash steps were taken without considering the views of the Russian-speaking population. We are not in the least convinced by the explanations that we received at the Permanent Council from a representative of that country. By the way, we have publicly called upon your Office to study this matter taking into account the respective positions of Russia and Estonia. We kindly ask you to keep your eye on it.

Also part of the same pattern is Latvia’s intention to deport over 800 Russian citizens who had failed an official exam to test proficiency in the Latvian language. In many cases we are talking here about elderly and infirm people who have lived in that country all their lives. What is this if not inhumane barbarity and pure and simple Nazism? We believe that your intervention in this situation would be most opportune.

Lithuania's idea with regard to relocating the remains of Soviet soldiers from burial sites in public spaces to cemeteries is sheer sacrilege. The Lithuanian authorities have earmarked more than 500,000 euros in the draft State budget for 2026 for these purposes. Those in power in Vilnius claim that such burial sites serve as propaganda for a totalitarian regime. Maybe it is time to call it a day? And to stop disturbing the final repose of long deceased people who laid down their lives to liberate the Baltic nations from fascism? Or is it the case that the current Baltic State authorities made up their mind long ago as to which side they would have taken during the Second World War?

The same side as that taken by the Nazis' Ukrainian henchmen? At present, the ideological successors of these are destroying – without so much as a second thought for basic ethical standards – the graves of fallen Soviet soldiers. A high-profile example of this is the recent demolition of the Hill of Glory memorial complex in Lviv, accompanied by the uncovering of 335 individual burials for exhumation of the soldiers' remains.

The lawlessness of the authorities in Ukraine and the Baltic States in relation to monuments to the warriors who rid the European continent of the "Brown Plague" must not be left without due assessment by you, Mr. Kamp. It is unacceptable for the history of the Second World War to be deliberately distorted and falsified, for Nazi criminals to be whitewashed, for cultural and historical heritage sites to be defiled.

A most relevant problem is that of mass statelessness. In Latvian history 15 October is a date of disgrace. On that day in 1991, a resolution was adopted "on the renewal of Republic of Latvia citizens' rights and fundamental principles of naturalization". It deprived 30 per cent of the country's inhabitants of the right to vote. They were rendered "aliens" overnight. We would remind you that there are currently some 180,000 "non-citizens" in Latvia, accounting for around 10 per cent of the population. In Estonia, around 5 per cent of the population, or some 62,000 people, fall into this category. The overwhelming majority of these individuals are ethnic Russians.

We cannot but agree with you that "it is essential that national minority issues are neither instrumentalized nor securitized". However, this problem has existed for a good number of decades. And in all these years, countries that count themselves as civilized have continued to openly trample on the rights of a significant segment of their populations under the pretext of ostensibly overcoming a heavy burden of historical legacy and protecting their national interests. We would suggest that it is in this context that one should examine the "contestations over ... history" referred to in your report.

High Commissioner Kamp,

Unfortunately, another major cluster of issues has slipped beneath your radar: the long-standing, systematic violations of the rights of Indigenous peoples in States "west of Vienna". For many a year now, relevant international organizations have been sounding the alarm over the harsh living conditions and the years upon years of discrimination experienced by First Nations members, especially women and girls, in Canada, Finland, Sweden and Denmark. Moreover, human rights defenders seeking to stand up for the rights of Indigenous peoples constantly find their work being criminalized and encounter reprisals.

High Commissioner Kamp,

The manifold examples we have cited of violations of the rights of national minorities and Indigenous peoples demand a principled stand on the part of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM). We call upon you to concern yourself with real issues and to actively leverage all the tools

available to the HCNM as an institution. Russia continues to stand ready to engage constructively and meaningfully with you and your Office.

Thank you for your attention.