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PC.DEL/530/26
4 June 2026

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1567th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 June 2026

**In response to the report by the
OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Christophe Kamp**

Mr. Chairperson,
High Commissioner,

We welcome you to the Permanent Council. We have carefully studied the report and would like to comment on it. By the way, I wish to point out that all our statements are now made available on the website of our Permanent Mission, accompanied by an unofficial English translation, on the day of the meeting in question.

In your report, you devoted considerable attention to the instrumentalization of national minority issues and to the politicization of historical memory. As we have repeatedly emphasized, in the current circumstances the interest of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in these matters is more timely and justified than ever.

You rightly note that “the trauma that different groups in society may have experienced” shapes perceptions of history and exerts a substantial influence on public sentiment.

We are convinced, however, that such “experience” cannot and must not imply the equivalence of all historical interpretations. There is a fundamental distinction between the endeavour to come to terms with complex aspects of the past and the cultivation of historical revanchism; between “trauma” as the suffering of millions of innocent victims and “trauma” as an instrument to justify discrimination, Russophobia and revision of the outcomes of the Second World War.

Not every reference to history, nor every disagreement with attempts to rewrite it, constitutes instrumentalization or politicization. Still less can the fight against the glorification of Nazis and their collaborators be classified as a “contested historical narrative”. This is not a matter of interpretation, nor an academic debate, nor a subject for ethically dubious balancing acts based on arguing that each social group has a right to its own memory. It is part of the fundamental consensus upon which the entire post-war European security architecture was built.

These trends are particularly evident in Ukraine and the Baltic States. There, the revision of historical memory has long become part of State policy, whereby certain chapters of the past are meticulously expunged, while others – the darkest chapters – are refashioned into national heroic mythology.

There is no need to go far to find examples. The most high-profile recent episodes include the reburial with State honours of the remains of the Hitlerite butcher Andrii Melnyk, and the conferral of the title “Heroes of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army” upon a Ukrainian armed forces unit “with the aim of restoring the historical traditions of the national army”. It is telling that these outrageous acts have provoked a strong reaction not only in Russian society but also in Poland, where the memory of the Volhynia massacre of 1943 remains an unhealed historical wound.

How can one possibly speak of “contested historical interpretations” in this context? The moral and legal verdict handed down to the Nazi criminals at the Nuremberg Tribunal is not subject to review. We would draw your attention to the fact that we highlighted these issues during the virtual round-table event entitled “Collaborationism: Lessons Not Learned” that we organized on 25 May. Analytic conclusions arising from that event were circulated by us among the Organization’s executive structures and participating States. We advise you to study them.

As for the Siena Recommendations on Contested Histories and National Minorities, we hope that they will not serve to “legitimize” such discourse about the “neutrality” and “equivalence” of all historical interpretations. One should not confuse “inclusive dialogue” with the glorification of Nazism. There can be no “balance of perceptions” between the memory of the struggle against Hitler and the lionizing of his collaborators. There can be no such thing as a “conflict-sensitive approach” that avoids calling revisionism by its name and criminals what they are. Let us be clear: the dismantling of monuments to liberators, marginalization of the memory of the victory over Nazism, and the glorification of collaborators are not “differences in perceptions of the past”. “Conflict prevention” cannot be based on the dilution of historical responsibility and the equating of victims and perpetrators.

High Commissioner,

We are deeply puzzled by the favourable assessments you continue to make regarding Ukraine, Moldova and the Baltic States. In particular, you commend their authorities’ efforts in the fields of integration, education, language policy and engagement with national minorities. Yet the actual situation for the Russian-speaking population remains extremely troubling.

Thus, in Ukraine, the Russian language, which more than two thirds of the country’s citizens use in their day-to-day lives, has been banned from all spheres of public life, including education, science and culture. The Russian-speaking population is subjected to harassment by “defenders” of the State language, while representatives of the Kyiv regime are already talking about introducing the post of “language monitor” in the armed forces of Ukraine. Even one-to-one communication in Russian at school is prohibited. The renaming of toponyms that have any connection whatsoever with Russia, the Soviet Union or the Russian Empire is in full swing across the country. A massive campaign has been launched to destroy monuments to Russian and Soviet scientists and cultural figures. Such a state of affairs cannot be justified by any references to Ukraine’s supposedly special situation in the context of so-called “Russian aggression”, as we have heard in this room today, especially since the Kyiv regime began its policy of discrimination against Russian-speaking Ukrainians long before the start of the special military operation.

The Kyiv regime is attempting to completely outlaw the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Persecution of its clergy and parishioners is intensifying; churches, monasteries and other church property, including Orthodox shrines, are being seized.

More detailed information on the aforementioned matters is to be found in the Russian Foreign Ministry's recent report entitled "The Human Rights Situation in Ukraine". We call upon you, High Commissioner, to address the substance of the issues raised therein.

Similar processes are also under way in the Baltic States – that is, substantial restrictions on the right to education, pressure on Russian schools, closure or marginalization of Russian-language media outlets, and reprisals against civil society activists who dare to express an alternative point of view. We are referring specifically to the persecution of Viktors Guščins and Alexander Gaponenko in Latvia, Sergey Seredenko in Estonia, Algirdas Paleckis in Lithuania, and many others.

Alarming trends are also gaining momentum in Moldova, where the Russian language is being artificially suppressed and the public and political space cleansed of any dissent. We have repeatedly raised these issues at Permanent Council meetings, most recently in our statement of 14 May.

All these problems fall directly within the scope of the High Commissioner's mandate. They warrant not silence or a smoothing over of "rough edges", but a meaningful and substantive response from you.

High Commissioner,

In your report, you repeatedly mention contacts with civil society representatives, persons belonging to national minorities and representatives of relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs). You paint a rather rosy picture in this regard. However, in Ukraine, Moldova and the Baltic States by no means all members of Russian-speaking communities are willing to engage with international bodies. Many are scared. Many worry about the consequences for themselves and their families. Russian-speaking activists are well aware that one ill-judged public comment could expose them to pressure, harassment, the loss of their job, accusations of disloyalty or even criminal prosecution. There are plenty of examples of such reprisals; you have the relevant information.

Therefore, the claim that meetings were held with a "broad range of interlocutors" requires substantial qualification. It is important not only to know with whom you were able to meet, but also to know who could not or did not dare to speak with you.

We therefore call upon the executive structure headed by you to pay due attention not only to official data and meetings organized by the host authorities, but also to alternative channels of information.

High Commissioner,

Regrettably, you also choose to turn a blind eye to the long-standing problems faced by Indigenous peoples in a number of OSCE participating States.

In March of this year, the United Nations Human Rights Committee issued its concluding observations following its review of the report on Canada. The Committee's experts expressed their concern about "the sustained rates of violence, including lethal violence, against Indigenous women" and "the lack of sufficient preventive measures to identify the roots of such structural violence, including patriarchal and racial stereotypes, and to protect Indigenous women and girls from such violence".

The situation is no better in Finland. The authorities of that country continue to replicate a colonial model of governance over Sami lands, with the State taking decisions on mineral exploration and the use of natural resources in the traditional territories of Sami communities without securing their free, prior and informed consent. United Nations treaty bodies in 2024 clearly and unequivocally pinpointed violations of the Sami people's rights to land and culture. Even such partisan NGOs as Amnesty International are sounding the alarm. In a 2025 report prepared in collaboration with the Saami Council, the Finnish Government's actions were described as "green colonialism" – the resources of the Sami people being used for the purposes of the "green transition", while Sami communities bear the primary and most severe consequences for reindeer herding, as well as for their language and culture.

We would point out that the examples cited by us are but the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the widespread violations of the rights of national minorities and Indigenous peoples by the countries of the collective West and its satellites.

High Commissioner,

In closing, we should like to highlight once again that double standards are unacceptable. When in some countries any national minority-related problems are examined in detail as conflict-generating factors and as "serious human rights violations", while in others systemic discrimination is dressed up as "reform", "integration" or "resilience-building", trust in the High Commissioner on National Minorities as an institution is, unfortunately, undermined.

The protection of national minorities must not be tied to political expediency. The rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population are human rights no less than those of any other groups in the OSCE area. They do not become less significant because of the current political conjuncture. Nor may they be sacrificed to the geopolitical interests of particular States.

Thank you for your attention.