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STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1582nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

22 October 2026

In response to the report by the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome Ms. Johnstone to this meeting of the Permanent Council. We thank you for your comprehensive report.

Russia has always considered the countering of trafficking in human beings to be a priority task. We are convinced that it is States and their relevant national entities that bear primary responsibility for protecting their citizens from this threat. Inter-State co-operation is no less important. Our country supports international efforts to combat this phenomenon, with the United Nations playing the leading role.

The Russian Federation has been consistently pursuing co-operation with the relevant OSCE structures, above all with the Office of the OSCE Special Representative. We traditionally take an active part in the conferences of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, bringing in experts from relevant Russian ministries and agencies, including at the level of senior officials. This year has been no exception.

We believe in the need for a comprehensive approach to this problem. It should cover combating the demand, protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators, but also eradicating the underlying causes of this phenomenon.

Regrettably, we are forced to note that the problem of trafficking in the OSCE area is gaining ever greater momentum.

We have repeatedly drawn attention to the existence of this problem in Ukraine, which has long been one of the world’s leading countries in terms of trafficking in human beings and black-market organ transplants.

Potential or confirmed victims of trafficking in human beings from Ukraine have been identified across the whole of Europe. According to the latest figures from the International Organization for

Migration, of the 39,000 cases of trafficking in human beings in Europe over the past 20 years, 19,000 of them involved Ukrainians.

With the connivance of the Zelenskyy regime, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of removing human organs, cells and tissues is flourishing. It should be recalled that the activities of a group of "black-market" transplant surgeons were uncovered in Ukraine in 2024. Moreover, as victims have testified, the militants there have no qualms about extracting material be it from captives, be it from their fellow countrymen in the ranks of the Ukrainian armed forces.

We have also raised at the Permanent Council the separate issue of child trafficking in Ukraine, including the operation of "baby factories". In early August 2023, a large-scale scheme for the transfer of newborn infants abroad under the cover of surrogacy was exposed in Ukraine. Among the organizers of the scheme were the heads of medical clinics providing reproductive medicine services in Kyiv and Kharkiv.

Journalistic investigations also reveal that underage Ukrainian citizens are systematically being illegally taken out of Ukraine and sent to EU countries and the United States of America, including for adoption by same-sex couples.

The existence of child trafficking in Ukraine is also confirmed by the country's National Social Service. According to this agency, at least 140 children have been affected by this problem over the past four years.

There has also been an increase in trafficking in human beings for the purposes of sexual exploitation, including of minors. Modern technologies are used by criminal groups to find and attract potential victims, and the relevant content is publicly available on social media. That being the case, it is more important than ever to combat the demand for "live goods", which in a number of OSCE participating States is at an all-time high.

For instance, since 2022, there has been a rise in online demand among European men for sexual services and pornography from Ukrainian women – which may leave these women vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. The media periodically publish the results of journalistic investigations that reveal networks of traffickers of "live goods" operating under the patronage of high-ranking Ukrainian officials.

Madam Co-ordinator,

The problem of trafficking in human beings is a most acute one in the OSCE area and requires the utmost attention on the part of the Special Representative. The Organization has built up a robust set of anti-trafficking commitments. We urge you and your colleagues to focus on implementing them.

In conclusion, allow me to wish you, Ms. Johnstone, and the staff at your Office every success in your work. You can always count on the constructive co-operation of our country.

Thank you for your attention.