



Eesti Vabariigi Alaline Esindus OSCE juures
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE

Statement by Ms Dea Hannust, Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the OSCE in response to the Statement delivered by the Russian Federation.

Permanent Council No 943

7 March 2013

Thank you, Mr Chairman,

I would like to respond to the statement of the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation and to take this opportunity to clarify some misunderstandings regarding the transfer to partial instruction in Estonian in the Russian language schools.

Estonian education system includes publicly financed schools that provide education in languages other than the official state language. Russian-language education is available in public and private schools at all levels and the allegations regarding the intended abolishment of Russian-language education in Estonia are groundless. The transfer to partial instruction in Estonian only concerns upper secondary level. After several years of preparation, now 60% of curricula has to be taught in Estonian. 40% of curricula will remain in Russian. This regulation does not apply to vocational or adult education. The legislative initiative mentioned with regard to private schools actually applies only to schools owned by local government. In private schools the language of instruction can be determined by the school itself – it can be any language, also at the upper secondary level.

The distinguished representative of the Russian Federation also mentioned the work of the High Commissioner of the National Minorities, with whom my government has regular contacts. I would like here to recall that the HCNM has

on numerous recent occasions warned against segregation of the national minorities in the society, and to assure that the goal of transitioning to Estonian as a language of instruction for secondary education is to help to ensure that all youth will have equal opportunities to obtain higher education, participate in society, and be successful in the labour market. It is also an important means of integration that can increase the cohesion of society.