

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/484/23

20 April 2023

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1419th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 April 2023

**In response to the address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
Marija Pejčinović Burić**

Madam Secretary General,

Your address once again served to confirm that the decision on the cessation of relations between my country and the Council of Europe was the right one to make. It is saddening to see how an organization that once sought to create a common humanitarian and legal space is degenerating into an instrument for advancing externally imposed agendas and destroying the spiritual and moral foundations of European civilization. The “Strasbourg platform” has once and for all lost its autonomy, become mired in duplicity and Russophobia, and turned into an appendage of the European Union tasked with ideologically re-educating its periphery.

We are obliged to note that the leadership of the Council of Europe has joined in the hybrid aggression unleashed against Russia by the Western countries and their Euro-Atlantic structures. This is a short-sighted decision which will bring no benefit for that multilateral platform. And you, Madam Secretary General, have become an exponent of double standards as regards international law and human rights. You did not make use of your visit to Ukraine on 3 April for a meaningful conversation with the Ukrainian authorities about their massive and gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, but merely to support the neo-Nazi powers that be in Kyiv.

In your statement of 31 March you marked the anniversary of the so-called “liberation of Bucha”, which was in fact the staging of alleged reprisals by Russian soldiers against civilians – something that bears no relation whatsoever to reality. However, you did not say a word about the Kyiv regime’s all too real crimes against the population of Donbas, which have been going on for nine years now. About the shelling of residential areas and infrastructure facilities, schools, hospitals and churches. About the Ukrainian formations’ remote mining of cities and towns in Donbas with anti-personnel mines. About the inhumane socio-economic and transport blockade of Donbas by the Ukrainian Government at the time when that region was formally still part of Ukraine.

What, though, has the Council of Europe really achieved in terms of the rule of law in Ukraine? Why has the Ukrainian justice system, which from the Council’s point of view is “exemplary”, not managed to

investigate the killings that occurred in 2014 on the Maidan in Kyiv and at the Trade Union House in Odessa? Why has no one as yet been held accountable for any of the murders of “undesirable” journalists in Ukraine?

Of course, this approach of deliberately ignoring awkward questions applies not only to the topic of Ukraine. The Council’s officials and its relevant structures have for many years been passing over such alarming trends as the rise of neo-Nazism, racial discrimination and religious intolerance in other member countries of the Council of Europe as well. Unfortunately, when it comes to protection of the rights of national minorities, the situation cannot be regarded as satisfactory. Instead of impartially discharging their duties, the Council’s experts very often take their cue from the countries of the Western alliance, which deliberately hushes up problems in States that are in the good books of the EU bloc.

Against this background, we note the fuss that is being made in Strasbourg over the preparations for the summit to be held in Reykjavik on 16 and 17 May. We know about the attempts to create certain mechanisms for the “arraignment” of Russia under the pretext of its actions to denazify and demilitarize the Kyiv regime, which is responsible for inflicting carnage on the population of Donbas over many years. We remind you that any so-called “tribunal” or “reparations” mechanisms that may be adopted against Russia would be legally void. They will achieve nothing other than to bring discredit upon the Council of Europe and individual member States. Any State joining in this initiative will be regarded by us as having committed a hostile act against the Russian Federation – with all the attendant consequences. More broadly, attempts to put these designs into practice could well cause unpredictable damage to European security and will inevitably exacerbate politico-military tensions in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Through its actions, the West is trying to divert the focus of attention from its historical crimes against other civilizations and the indigenous populations of Northern, Central and Latin America, Asia and Africa. Moreover, it is doing so while there is ongoing neocolonial exploitation of many countries. Some regimes are making it increasingly likely that “registers of damage” will be set up in relation to them on account of their genocide against entire nations and their plundering of those nations’ natural resources and cultural assets. There will, in addition, be separate investigations into the bloody adventures in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and Syria, in which not only the United States of America but also some members of the Council of Europe participated. Historical justice will sooner or later be restored.

As far as human rights are concerned, Russia intends to show zero tolerance for the West’s striving to use the structures of the Council of Europe to exercise a destructive influence on domestic political processes in Russia and in our brotherly country Belarus under the smokescreen of developing relations with civil society. Attempts to interfere in our internal affairs will be firmly thwarted. Getting up intrigues with “political émigrés” will lead nowhere.

Instead of sowing confrontation, the Council of Europe ought to focus its efforts on developing a unifying agenda, including in collaboration with the OSCE. Co-operation between the two organizations should be transparent and collegial. Its priority areas were laid down by Permanent Council Decision No. 670 of 28 April 2005. As you know, these include the fight against terrorism and trafficking in human beings, the protection of the rights of national minorities, and the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination. The use of non-consensus methodology, unilateral approaches and confrontational language in this context is unacceptable.

And now to conclude. We are carefully noting all Russophobic attacks and initiatives. Make no illusions: the times when one could get away scot-free with Russophobia are long past. Russia will consistently defend its vital interests and uphold the safety of its citizens by all available means.

As for the Council of Europe itself, the fact is that, after Russia's withdrawal, it is desperately trying to find its place in the current European realities. And it is doing so not in accordance with its fundamental objectives of achieving greater unity on the European continent, but in quite the opposite way, namely by exacerbating divisions between civilizations. Unless over in Strasbourg they reconsider this Russophobia, the Council of Europe is doomed to be absorbed into the European Union and NATO and its work to be subordinated to confrontation-related tasks. A sorry ending for what was once a pan-European organization, don't you think?

Thank you for your attention.