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**STATEMENT BY
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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1387th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1 September 2022

On the ongoing gross violations of the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population by some Western OSCE participating States

Mr. Chairperson,

August proved to be a “rich” month in terms of manifestations of Russophobia and discrimination against the Russian and Russian-speaking population by a number of OSCE participating States. The direct consequences of ubiquitous anti-Russian hysteria were felt to the full by Russian citizens in northern Italy, where the number of provocations targeting cars with Russian number plates increased over the past month.

Russophobic slogans are taking increasingly grotesque forms. Some participating States are displaying particular ingeniousness in their striving to elevate discrimination against the Russian and Russian-speaking population to a supranational level.

As is known, the authorities in Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland recently called for restrictions on the issuing of visas to Russian citizens for travel to Europe. We would remind you that the Schengen visa code does not provide for a wholesale, indiscriminate prohibition on the issuance of short-stay visas. Moreover, restricting the right to freedom of movement is contrary to the relevant provisions of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the 1989 Concluding Document of the CSCE Vienna Meeting of 1986.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Latvian authorities are fixated on total discrimination against the Russian-speaking population. On 24 August, in an interview with Latvian Radio, President Egils Levits said: “We are seeing how part of the Russian community is not loyal to our State. Our task is to deal with them, that is, to isolate them.” If we may complete the sentence for him: not simply to isolate but to assimilate them, depriving them of their identity, their language and even their historical memory.

It was for that very purpose that, despite the inhabitants’ prolonged opposition, the monument to the Soviet soldier-liberators in Riga was dismantled between 23 and 25 August. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has declared these actions to be unlawful and called on the Latvian authorities to stop the

destruction of Soviet memorials and ensure that the parts of already demolished monuments are preserved. However, the Latvian Government, true to its fine tradition, will probably just ignore the prescriptions of the United Nations.

The total linguistic purge continues: a draft law on the restriction of bilingualism is being prepared. The aim of that obnoxious instrument is to completely prohibit use of the Russian language in workplaces and in various spheres of public life. Latvia continues brazenly to violate its international obligations to protect the rights of national minorities, including the provisions of the CSCE Vienna Concluding Document (1989) and the Copenhagen Document (1990). We call upon the High Commissioner on National Minorities to duly respond to the discriminatory policies of this OSCE participating State.

Estonia by no means lags behind Latvia in reprisals against the historical heritage. On 16 August, the monument to the T-34 tank in the city of Narva was dismantled in a particularly cynical fashion. Such treatment was also meted out to memorial slabs on the central city square, a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Igor Grafov, an obelisk dedicated to Red Army soldiers, a memorial to the landing at Meriküla and two monuments in the town of Narva-Jõesuu. Moreover, the glorification of Nazism is in full swing in that country. In particular, on 27 August a traditional gathering of admirers of the Estonians who served in the 20th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS took place in the Sinimäed Hills (Blue Hills) to mark “the 80th anniversary of the creation of the Estonian Legion”.

The Estonian authorities are no less assiduous than their Latvian neighbours in combating dissenters. On 16 August, the country’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Urmas Reinsalu, said that “if any foreigner who is in Estonia on the basis of a residence permit decides to oppose the transfer of Soviet monuments, it [that person’s permit] will be cancelled.”

Poland, the country chairing our Organization, is also relentlessly extirpating the historical heritage. Of the 561 memorial sites included in the “List of memorials to the Soviet defenders who fell fighting on the territory of Poland”, fewer than one hundred have been preserved. The process of their destruction continues. In early August, a Soviet monument commemorating the Red Army was dismantled in the town of Malbork. A similar monument was demolished in the town of Brzeg on 25 August. A further 36 memorials are scheduled to meet with the same fate.

Mr. Chairperson,

Sport and the area of education are again under attack. For example, it has come to light that Elizaveta Polstyanaya, a rhythmic gymnast of Russian origin who had been representing Latvia, was expelled from the Latvian national team because she refused to renounce her Russian citizenship.

In the Czech Republic there are calls at the official level for Russian students not to be allowed into the country. Miroslava Němcová, a senator from the Civic Democratic Party, expressed herself to that effect on her Twitter account on 15 July. I quote: “Until Russia ends the war and makes up for the damage [to Ukraine], they [Russian students] have no business being here.” According to the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Tatiana Moskalkova, in view of the Russophobia whipped up by the authorities in Finland, Finnish students training in Russia to become teachers of the Russian language have begun to “feel ashamed of their discipline”.

We for our part should like to confirm that Russia remains open to foreign students wishing to study there. Preliminary estimates indicate that around 1,500 people from Austria, Germany, Hungary and other countries will be studying at Russian institutions of higher education during this academic year.

Mr. Chairperson,

The facts we have cited attest to how a number of Western OSCE participating States are flagrantly violating their human rights obligations. In this context it is surprising that there has been no reaction whatsoever from representatives of the OSCE executive structures. We urge them once again to end their silence and find the courage to give an objective assessment of the arbitrariness that is taking place.

Thank you for your attention.