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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1449th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 November 2023

**On the violations by Moldova of OSCE human dimension commitments**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are obliged to draw attention to the deteriorating human rights situation in the Republic of Moldova. Blinded by the desire to demonstrate loyalty to their Western handlers, the authorities of this OSCE participating State are violating international commitments, “tightening the screws” on the Russian-speaking population and Russian citizens, intimidating activists and representatives of “undesirable” civil society organizations, and waging an offensive against historical memory. In that context, it is significant that Moldova is regularly among those who vote against the resolution of the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Under the pretext of ensuring national security and countering supposed external interference, the official authorities have launched a veritable campaign to destroy any form of dissent and to justify flouting OSCE commitments. The local elections of 5 November, to which six Russian observers from the monitoring mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) were not allowed, are highly indicative in that regard. In addition, the election was marked by the unceremonious purging of the last pockets of alternative viewpoints from the information sphere, by unscrupulous reprisals by the authorities against candidates, including a direct ban on participation in the elections, and by discrimination on the basis of language. Specialist non-governmental organizations, such as ENEMO, have also spoken out in a similar vein.

The ongoing media censorship and the closure of six more Russian-language broadcasters on the eve of the election was considered by the ODIHR observers to be a disproportionate restriction on freedom of expression. The experts found the actions of the authorities to be inconsistent with international standards and OSCE commitments. Against this background, the lack of reaction of the Representative on Freedom of the Media to Moldova’s gross violations of the relevant human dimension commitments is puzzling.

We have taken note of the increasingly frequent unacceptable statements by the country’s officials that could be described as hateful and inciting inter-ethnic discord. Take, for example, the unhealthy reaction

to the annual action by the Russian Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) to deliver school textbooks to Transdnistria. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Nicu Popescu characterized the sending of educational materials as an “unfriendly step” that “is not conducive to the maintenance of stability and tranquillity”. The question arises as to how the school supplies delivered to Moldova back in August this year, having complied with all customs procedures and obtained the necessary permits, can affect the internal political situation in the country. It is frightening to speculate what the next step by the book censors might be.

Through their statements, the country’s authorities are effectively depriving Russian-speaking citizens and representatives of national minorities of the right to receive education in their native language. Together with the ban on the broadcasting of Russian-language channels, a very ugly picture is emerging in this candidate for membership of the European Union with regard to the protection of national minorities and ethnic groups, and also freedom of expression and the media. Specifically, we refer here to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1989 CSCE Vienna Concluding Document. We might also mention the 1990 CSCE Copenhagen Document, paragraph 34 of which clearly states: “The participating States will endeavour to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities, notwithstanding the need to learn the official language or languages of the State concerned, have adequate opportunities for instruction of their mother tongue or in their mother tongue... In the context of the teaching of history and culture in educational establishments, they will also take account of the history and culture of national minorities.”

This is not to mention the inconsistency of such comments by officials of the Republic of Moldova with some of the thematic recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM). Paragraph 12 of its Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Social and Economic Life points out that “States should ensure that there is a meaningful and continuous dialogue between governmental authorities and national minorities on issues pertaining to their participation in social and economic life, such as ... education ... Standing bodies for this purpose should have sufficient access, capacity and resources to ensure effectiveness.”

Mr. Chairperson,

The facts we have listed confirm that the Moldovan authorities, inspired by the destructive practices of Ukraine and the Baltic States, have chosen an aggressive course towards the Russian and Russian-speaking population. This policy does not meet with the approval of the country’s population, as was clearly demonstrated by last Sunday’s vote. We call upon Moldova to return to the conscientious fulfilment of its OSCE commitments in the human dimension and upon the Organization’s relevant executive structures – the ODIHR Director Matteo Mecacci and the HCNM Kairat Abdrakhmanov – to respond within the framework of their mandates to what is happening.

Thank you for your attention.