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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1387th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1 September 2022

**On the failure of the Polish OSCE Chairmanship to organize the work in
the human dimension**

Mr. Chairperson,

Over the past eight months, the human dimension has been held to ransom by the unconstructive, politicized and anti-Russian position of the Polish Chairmanship in relation to the events in Ukraine. We have yet to see any co-operation or “honest brokering”. One gets the impression that in their work in this field the Polish authorities are guided by the motto *après nous le déluge*.

This is not surprising. Like blinkers, the historical complexes of a bloc mentality prevent Poland from fulfilling its functions in good faith and taking into account different opinions and positions. A telling move in this respect is the arbitrary decision to revoke the registration of prominent Russian social activists who had signed up for the second Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting. We trust that the priority announced by North Macedonia with regard to promoting the OSCE’s co-operation with civil society organizations will be implemented fully and in accordance with the relevant commitments of our Organization.

The Polish authorities’ fatal mistakes of “Ukrainianizing” the work in that dimension and freezing the mandatory consultations on OSCE human dimension events have effectively paralysed activities under the third “basket”. In this way, the Polish Chairmanship has brought about an unprecedentedly long pause in the entire preparatory work for these meetings and in the process to reach agreement on their funding. And all this in a context of extreme time pressure. Even the preceding Swedish Chairmanship, the quality of whose work could also be faulted in many respects, makes a far more professional impression in comparison. As they say, everything is relative.

Despite the repeated reminders from Russia about the need to resume consultations, all these appeals – made against a hum of vague excuses from Poland – were disregarded. The “efforts” that the Chairmanship is crediting itself with are no more than wishful thinking.

Moreover, when such events were organized after all, States were simply presented with the fait accompli of their being held. It is clear that in these circumstances there could, by definition, not be any normal discussions. That is what happened with the three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings which Russia was forced to abstain from participating in.

Additionally, Russia asserted that all OSCE human dimension events, along with the headquarters of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), should be moved out of Poland. We reiterate this position of principle of ours, which has been prompted by the incapability and reluctance of the Polish authorities to provide real security guarantees to foreign diplomats and participants in international forums who find themselves in Polish territory. We call on North Macedonia as the future holder of the Chairmanship to treat this matter seriously. By the way, we have yet to hear any proper apologies for the barbarous assault on Russian diplomats, including the Ambassador, that occurred in the Polish capital on 9 May this year, or any assurances that such incidents will not be repeated in future.

As it happens, the fact that our position is correct is confirmed by the Polish Government itself. We would remind you how a few days ago, the Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki, said: “Now is not the time to benefit from Russian tourists’ money. We must send a very strong signal to Russia, to all Russian citizens, that their actions in support of Putin are unacceptable, that they are even criminal activities. Poland supports, together with Finland and the Baltic countries, the blocking of any visas for Russian citizens, except for humanitarian visas.”

It is natural to ask to what extent this high-ranking Polish official is familiar with the obligations of his country – as the host of OSCE human dimension events and of the ODIHR headquarters – vis-à-vis our Organization and all participating States. Moreover, the ODIHR serves as the venue not merely for the aforementioned major conferences but also for meetings of working groups made up of experts from many OSCE participating States. Or should we assess that statement by Mr. Morawiecki as a veiled hint that Poland is no longer interested in keeping the ODIHR headquarters in its capital, with all the implications that that would entail?

Mr. Chairperson,

The culmination of absurd behaviour and, consequently, of the lamentable state of affairs at the OSCE was reached with the Chairmanship’s arbitrary decision to hold under its aegis a so-called “Warsaw Human Dimension Conference”. It is quite obvious that, with this surrogate event, Poland is trying to mask its inadequacy in view of the fatal mistake that it made in freezing consultations on the annual OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) and other meetings from our Organization’s package of human dimension events.

It is clear that in the aforesaid circumstances, Warsaw was not in a position to host the HDIM and should not have been selected. In this regard, the Polish Chairmanship has essentially committed fraud, at the same time accusing, *inter alia*, Russia of blocking the HDIM. It goes without saying that Russia has no intention of officially participating in the aforementioned informal gathering – one that, to boot, is being financed from the Polish budget, which is much the worse for wear owing to the Polish Government’s short-sighted policy with regard to Ukraine.

We call on North Macedonia as the future holder of the Chairmanship to study carefully the highly lamentable experience of its predecessors and not to repeat their mistakes.

Thank you for your attention.