

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE
THIRD OSCE SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING
ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND EDUCATION: PROMOTING HUMAN
RIGHTS, PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND SECURITY IN THE
OSCE REGION THROUGH EDUCATION**

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**Session I: Policy Making for Mainstreaming Human Rights Education in
the OSCE Region**

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished colleagues,

Russia was always a multi-ethnic State and remains so today. This diversity, born out of centuries of shared history between people of different ethnic groups and faiths, has taught us to live in peace with each other. Over the last decade, the Russian authorities have pursued a consistent policy to include human rights education programmes in the curriculum and spread them throughout our higher education establishments, and this has made an important contribution to achieving social stability.

The rapidly changing geopolitical situation and the demands of international law make it essential to continue enhancing our policies and national legislation regulating inter-ethnic relations. The main document on inter-ethnic harmony is the Russian Federation State Ethnic Policy Strategy through to 2025, approved by the President of the Russian Federation on 19 December 2012.

This strategy aims to enhance national legislation and governance, harmonize inter-ethnic relations, facilitate ethnocultural development and education, support the State language and the languages of the peoples of Russia, and work together with civil society institutions and educational establishments.

As part of the work to implement the strategy, a State budget-financed programme was approved to implement ethnic policy. It provides for specific measures in all of the aforementioned areas. In particular, at the federal and regional level, a common system for monitoring inter-ethnic and interfaith relations and early warning of conflict situations was established. This system makes it possible to monitor growing conflicts and sets out preventive measures.

Nearly all Russian Federation regions have adopted laws on supporting ethnocultural associations, preserving local culture and languages, protecting the rights of small indigenous peoples and supporting youth ethnocultural organizations. We have drafted action programmes to strengthen inter-ethnic and interfaith harmony, in which the spread of basic human rights knowledge among large sections of the population is an important component.

In addition to the national educational programmes, Russia is successfully implementing joint projects with the Council of Europe and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The project "HELP in Russia" and the master's programme in human rights education aim to give professional training to hundreds of students in Russia's leading law schools and also to provide professional development for judges, prosecutors and lawyers. These programmes' graduates make a significant contribution to the practical implementation and use of the principles and standards enshrined in regional and universal human rights agreements.

At the same time, we think that in developing human rights education policy it is important to avoid an ideological approach to training. We note with regret that a number of States and international organizations are gradually forming a "human rights nomenclature", which claims a monopoly on knowledge and skills in the area of human rights. In many cases, this group of "professional human rights activists" exists not to spread as widely as possible knowledge and experience, but serves the concrete foreign policy interests of a number of powerful States for whom the universality of and general access to democratic values and freedoms is the least of their concerns.

Abuses in this area often result in dishonest interpretation of human rights standards and attempts to introduce privileges for particular social groups in violation of the principle of everyone being equal before the courts and the law. As a result, it seems that Europe now has "a market for human rights services", which is closely linked to regional human rights institutions, above all to the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights. Unfortunately, this "market" operates under the laws of "ideological colonialism", which means that human rights issues are unjustifiably politicized and doubt is cast on traditional humanistic values that are inherent to European cultures and have proven their lasting value for ensuring social concord and respect of the "social contract" by all.

We should like to make a concrete recommendation to the participating States at this meeting and propose examining possibilities for financial support for the aforementioned master's programme in human rights education which is being carried out in Russia with the OHCHR's participation. This would make it possible to extend the programme to higher education establishments in other OSCE participating States, in particular, in Central Asia.