

PC.DEL/1564/18  
20 December 2018

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1210th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 December 2018

**In response to the address by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the  
Council of Europe, Ms. Dunja Mijatović**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Ms. Mijatović, dear Dunja,

We are pleased to welcome you once again to a meeting of the Permanent Council.

We value the Council of Europe as a unique pan-European mechanism for protecting human rights and a forum that makes it possible to safeguard the unity of the humanitarian and legal European space. It is clear that the successful fulfilment of these tasks is not possible without giving equal consideration to the interests of all Member States. At the same time, the Council of Europe must adopt a depoliticized approach to its work. It is not easy to put these principles into practice, but it is the only way if we really want to improve the Council of Europe's effectiveness.

Your report confirms that there are a multitude of problems on the continent. Phenomena such as xenophobia and religious intolerance, also in relation to Christians and Muslims, have ceased to be a rare occurrence in modern Europe. The number of manifestations of racism and extremism is not decreasing, and radical nationalist sentiments have become more intense. These alarming trends can be seen in a number of countries in the direct glorification of accomplices of the Nazis, and even support at government level of neo-Nazi aspirations and attempts to rewrite the history of the Second World War. This is particularly true of Ukraine. The desecration and destruction of monuments to those who fell in the fight against Nazism and the persecution of veterans of the anti-Hitler coalition have become commonplace in a number of other countries as well. It is surprising that there is no firm and systematic condemnation of such policies by institutions called upon to provide objective assessments of the human rights situation in every single Council of Europe Member State. We trust that these problems will be a focus of your attention.

We agree that there are systemic problems in safeguarding the human rights of migrants. Above all, the shortcomings in the protection of migrant children and the children of "non-citizens" give cause for concern. In general, it is unacceptable that a phenomenon as

shameful as mass statelessness, officially dividing people into “first-class” and “second-class” categories, should exist.

There has been no notable progress either in the situation of national minorities, first and foremost in respect to their linguistic and educational rights. The Ukrainian authorities, for example, continue their systematic Ukrainization of all areas of public life, strictly enforcing language quotas in the media, prejudicing the interests of millions of Russian-speaking citizens, and not hesitating to act in violation of their own obligations.

Your report expresses concern at the worsening conditions under which professional journalists work. We share this concern, particularly as it affects Russian media. Here, too, it is impossible not to mention Ukraine, where the persecution of Russian journalists has exceeded all conceivable bounds. It has long been more than simple refusal of entry or accreditation; their lives are at risk. The examples are widely known. Even in this sad series, the trumped-up charges against Kirill Vyshinsky, editor-in-chief of RIA Novosti Ukraine, stand out. The work of Russian media in a number of other countries in the Council of Europe area, which are commonly regarded as “developed democracies”, also faces serious obstacles.

We believe that a more resolute reaction by the Commissioner to these violations is called for. We are confident, Ms. Mijatović, that your great experience and purposefulness will enable you to diminish their negative impact. You must agree that it is hardly fair that in some cases the slightest errors are targeted, while in other cases major problems are ignored.

It would be useful to make greater use of the possibilities for collaboration between the Council of Europe and the OSCE in the framework of the four priority areas for co-operation agreed in 2005. Two of them – protection of the rights of national minorities, and tolerance and non-discrimination – are directly within the remit of the Commissioner for Human Rights. We trust that in the next draft report by the OSCE–Council of Europe Co-ordination Group to be presented next spring, we will finally see real efforts to correct the intolerable situation that has developed in Ukraine, the Baltic States and a number of other countries.

In conclusion, the Council of Europe remains of great importance to Russia, particularly thanks to its accession to multilateral, legally binding conventions that cover not only human rights but also areas such as combating terrorism and corruption, protection of personal data, drug quality, culture and sport. Together they contribute to the noble idea of creating a single legal and humanitarian European space. Your efforts to promote this idea, distinguished Commissioner, will continue to enjoy our support.

Thank you for your attention.