

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1049th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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**On International Workers' Day**

Mr. Chairperson,

Tomorrow, 1 May, the international community will mark International Workers' Day.

The story of this holiday is rooted in the mid-nineteenth century. International Workers' Day was officially observed for the first time in 1890 in a number of European countries and the United States of America. Today it is observed in many countries of the world, including Russia.

The importance of ensuring the economic and social rights of citizens is as relevant as ever, especially in a time of economic crisis, when the rise of unemployment, inflation and cuts in social benefits are leading to tension and radicalization in society. This, in turn, can trigger the outbreak of political, social, ethnic and religious frictions. Even States that would appear to be entirely trouble-free cannot escape such a danger.

We see what kind of difficulties a number of European countries have run into after experiencing for themselves the harsh consequences of the financial and economic crisis. The policy of austerity measures being adopted in a drastic fashion by the European Union had no effect on this situation. Russia, unfortunately, is also having serious socio-economic problems, despite the Government's significant efforts to maintain social and labour guarantees.

In view of the severity of these problems, one can only note with regret that, despite the existence of relevant commitments, the topic of defending the social and economic rights of workers, and the role of trade unions, is virtually never discussed within the OSCE.

Ensuring the social and economic rights of vulnerable groups of citizens – the unemployed, low-income families, disabled persons, the elderly and children – is no less an important consideration. At many OSCE events, representatives of various non-governmental organizations have frequently called upon the Organization to address these issues in a

meaningful way. In the course of discussions, however, our Western partners, with admirable regularity, ignore this body of OSCE commitments, notwithstanding their own fervent appeals to “hear the voice of civil society”.

Observing the rights of citizens at work, and ensuring decent wages and living conditions, are the basis of a stable society. Despite the importance of respecting civil and political freedoms, we must never forget the need to defend the social, economic and cultural rights of citizens. Violating or ignoring them can create a direct threat to the security of States.

The OSCE must also play a fitting role in promoting the social and economic rights of citizens, among other things, by sharing experience and monitoring the implementation of the relevant commitments.

We trust that the topic of social and economic rights will be duly reflected in the Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which is to be prepared in accordance with a decision adopted at the Basel Ministerial Council meeting.

Thank you for your attention.