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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1419th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 April 2023

On the deteriorating situation in the OSCE's human dimension

Mr. Chairperson,

We are obliged to raise the issue of the rapidly deteriorating situation in the OSCE's human dimension.

Not a single round of simultaneous consultations with all the participating States on the thematic work under the third "basket" has been held since the start of the year. We should like to remind you that the "package" of principal events, the agendas and modalities for which are agreed on by the participating States, includes the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) and the Human Dimension Seminar (held in Warsaw), along with three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings (SHDMs). Of these, the HDIM and the Seminar are approved through the adoption of the relevant Permanent Council decisions. The others are approved without the adoption of decisions, but they entail the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office holding "extensive consultations" with the participating States and executive structures on the topics for the supplementary meetings, as provided for by Permanent Council Decision No. 241 of 9 July 1998.

In early March, the Chairmanship simply put out a relevant list of dates and topics, evidently following the principle of "take it or leave it". In response to our repeated appeals to finally begin the corresponding consultations, we heard vague excuses. The attempts to create a semblance of activity were also very unconvincing.

As for the supplementary meetings, which the Chairmanship is already convening, there is no way that one can speak of any consultations on their content having been held, let alone of an "extensive" discussion. The participating States are simply being presented with a *fait accompli* as regards the dates and topics of these events, either at the Human Dimension Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council or through information distributed via the Secretariat. In view of such an unconstructive and irresponsible approach, Russia was obliged to boycott the first SHDM. Since the situation has not been rectified, we intend to do likewise with the second SHDM as well.

Similarly, we were puzzled by the Chairmanship's remarks on the Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw that we heard during the meeting of the Human Dimension Committee on 18 April. The Chairmanship made it sound as if the topic of "Roma and Sinti" for the Seminar was, to all intents and purposes, a settled matter. We should like to remind you that this Seminar requires the adoption of a separate decision by the Permanent Council, that is, by all the participating States. Not to mention the fact that we no longer regard Warsaw as a suitable venue for the OSCE's human dimension events. We have, on more than one occasion, voiced arguments for relocating these beyond Poland and have no intention of repeating ourselves.

We are obliged to note that the approach displayed by the Chairmanship-in-Office contravenes its mandate, which is based on the decisions of OSCE decision-making bodies. We regard this approach as a violation of collectively adopted norms regulating the work of the Chairmanships and also as being contrary to established practice. In particular, in accordance with paragraph 2 of the 2002 Porto Ministerial Council decision on the role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, the Chairmanship is obliged to ensure "that its actions are not inconsistent with positions agreed by all the participating States and that the whole spectrum of opinions of participating States is taken into account".

We call upon the Chairmanship not to repeat the lamentable experience of its Polish predecessor and, instead, to fulfil its duties in good faith and to finally begin proper consultations on the human dimension agenda. Otherwise, all responsibility for the disruption of work under the third "basket" must, in our view, rest with the authorities in Skopje.

Thank you for your attention.