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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1482nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 July 2024

On the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality

Madam Chairperson,
Madam Secretary General,

We have taken note of your report on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the promotion of so-called “gender equality”. We categorically object to the continued packing of all areas of the Organization’s work with the “Ukraine issue” and the promotion of non-consensus concepts. For example, there is no mandate in the OSCE for “security sector governance and reform”. The holding of highly dubious seminars under the OSCE banner for an “exchange of experience”, including training on some kind of “common methodology for documenting war crimes”, is another example.

We also warn against attempts to impose a broad interpretation of the women, peace and security agenda. Its thematic scope is not in line with existing OSCE commitments approved by all the participating States. There is no need for this fixation on figures alone. Such a focus cannot replace the full range of commitments that every State has with regard to ensuring so-called gender equality and empowering women. Nor do we consider it meaningful to overestimate the significance of the gender factor in strengthening security in geographical areas affected by the actions of armed and terrorist groups. The emphasis here should be on swiftly resolving the crises themselves.

Madam Chairperson,

We note the success of the Organization in ensuring gender parity in all categories of posts. It is impressive. At this rate, full gender equality among staff of OSCE institutions and field operations could be achieved before 2026. The question is what then? Will the Organization increase the proportion of women staff beyond 50 per cent or focus on maintaining the balance with men in their representation? I would be curious to know what plans there are in that regard.

When selecting candidates for employment in the OSCE, under no circumstances should the gender factor be used as the only recruitment criterion. Staff Regulation 3.01 makes it clear that the recruitment of officials should be guided by the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, taking full

account of the principle of recruiting staff from all OSCE participating States on a fair basis, and only mentions the importance of gender balance at the end.

It would be hoped that the Secretariat would invest as much effort and energy in ensuring fair geographical representation in the Organization as it does in gender parity. The facts appear to indicate the opposite, however. It is regrettable that for some reason nothing is heard about the successes on the first aspect, while positive results in the second can be clearly seen. Perhaps the problem is that the Secretariat is overly focused on promoting gender to the detriment of all other important goals. For the moment, the situation is out of kilter. We are witnessing a serious geographical bias, which is reflected in the dominance of representatives of countries “west of Vienna” in most executive structures, especially in leadership positions. Such an unjustified imbalance is of utmost concern to us.

Why has the Secretariat failed to develop clear targets for achieving geographical balance in the OSCE and set timelines for their implementation, as was done with the 2019 Gender Parity Strategy? Could it be that this task is not seen as a priority?

Detailed written answers to all these questions would be welcome, preferably in the form of a separate report to the Permanent Council on progress towards achieving a fair distribution of international contracted and seconded posts among the participating States, with a phased strategy and specific commitments to carry out this urgent task in the medium term.

Madam Chairperson,

The OSCE makes an important contribution to promoting equal opportunities for the participation of women in economic activities. These include efforts to develop the professional skills of women entrepreneurs, their engagement in anti-corruption work and improving their familiarity with ways of dealing with crisis situations resulting from natural disasters. Alongside these undoubtedly useful initiatives, we believe it is important for the Organization not to lose sight of the priority issues for the majority of participating States: continuing education and vocational retraining for women in a changing economic situation; protection of the family, mothers and children; and protection of, and support for, large and low-income families.

Madam Chairperson,

Combating violence against women is a priority for Russia both domestically and internationally. Its eradication requires an understanding of the systemic causes of this phenomenon, which include the problem of social and economic inequality. In that regard, the focus should be on eradicating poverty, eliminating institutional barriers, reducing social stratification, and creating favourable conditions for a harmonious combination of family and professional life. It is also important to foster an attitude in society of zero tolerance of any manifestations of violence, including domestic violence.

Great attention is traditionally accorded in the Russian Federation to ensuring equality between women and men. The relevant legislation is highly developed, innovative development plans are being introduced, and the National Action Strategy for Women, which runs until 2030, is being implemented. Russian women are well educated and well represented in business and occupy leading positions in all branches of government. As of 2024, there are about 785,000 women in executive positions in large and medium-sized companies in Russia. This is only 5 per cent less than the number of men in similar positions.

In addition, according to the data of the Ministry of Labour of the Russian Federation, published in April of this year, our country as a whole has achieved gender parity in employment. The perception of

Russian citizens is also important. According to a 2023 survey by the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre, more than 60 per cent of respondents believe that women in modern Russia have as many rights and opportunities as men.

Madam Chairperson,

The advancement of women is a most important task for the international community, demanding joint co-ordinated efforts. It is not only the elaboration of ambitious plans and declarations of good intentions that will help to achieve this goal. First and foremost, this involves sustained, systematic work on the underlying causes of inequality and the conscientious fulfilment by participating States of the relevant obligations. That is what we encourage you to do.

Thank you for your attention.