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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1484th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

25 July 2024

On France's malign activities and interference in the OSCE area

Madam Chairperson,

Today we shall talk about the sad transformation of the French Republic, which stood at the cradle of the universal system of human rights and international law as a whole, into a State that is in effect setting the fashion for the suppression of rights and freedoms and, moreover, has no qualms about actively interfering in the affairs of other countries with a view to destabilizing entire regions.

We have spoken many times about France's destructive actions in the Ukrainian conflict. By the way, the political mood in the Fifth Republic clearly indicates that the course taken with regard to Ukraine does not enjoy the support of a majority of the French population.

France played a specific role in supporting the overthrow of constitutional authority in Ukraine and in the armed coup d'état of February 2014, in scuppering the implementation of the agreement between President Viktor Yanukovich and representatives of the militarized opposition. The signature of a representative of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs affixed to the agreement of 21 February 2014 proved to be worth less than the paper it was written on. France did nothing as a guarantor of the implementation of that agreement to see that it was put into practice and immediately recognized the outcomes of the armed coup that was carried out the following day.

The French leadership subsequently encouraged in every possible way the puppet government in Kyiv to brazenly sabotage the implementation of the Minsk agreements, which were meant to ensure a sustainable political and diplomatic resolution of the crisis. A participant in the Normandy format, French President François Hollande acknowledged in 2023, when he had already left office, what France's true intentions were. I quote: "The time given to Ukraine by the Minsk agreements enabled it to build up its combat readiness." In other words, he admitted that France engaged in diplomatic subterfuge for the sake of strengthening the Kyiv regime's military capabilities and then putting them to use in combat.

After the start of the Russian special military operation, the French leadership did everything possible to drag out the armed confrontation and not to allow the sides to reach a viable settlement. The arms deliveries to the Kyiv regime and the bellicose bravado of the current President, Emmanuel Macron,

including his musings about being willing to send troops to Ukraine (according to the information available, we are talking here about more than 2,000 military specialists), constitute direct evidence of a policy aimed at involving France in an armed conflict with Russia and are deliberate actions to destroy what remains of the pan-European security system.

We shall cite a clear example of such malign activities and interference. After the start of the Russian special military operation, David Piguet, a French citizen who had been sent to Ukraine by the Government of France as a staff member of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and who headed the team of monitors in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, immediately set about organizing a foreign military presence in Ukraine and actively took part in the creation of the “Foreign Legion” of the Ukrainian armed forces. Subsequently, this French citizen – who has a military education on account of his having graduated from the French military academy of Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan, where he undertook specialized studies in “military tactics”, and who makes no secret of his ties to the French Government and of his experience in the field of military intelligence – went on to become a specialist in the planning of military operations with a Ukrainian neo-Nazi armed formation, namely the Right Sector Ukrainian Volunteer Corps. Could the representative of France explain to us now who in the French Government, and at what level, signed off on such non-trivial activities by Mr. Piguet?

France, which denies at all levels that French mercenaries are present on Ukrainian territory, has to date already seen over 150 of its citizens fall in combat, out of the more than 400 who arrived there.

As is well known, France’s malicious actions go far beyond the OSCE area, not least in the context of the Fifth Republic realizing its neocolonial aspirations. It is intriguing to observe France’s highly selective approach to the fulfilment of its obligations under international law. Especially when representatives of France profess here in this room their commitment to certain “principles and values” and demand such commitment from others while shamelessly violating them in various regions of the world.

How does the Fifth Republic itself honour key OSCE commitments? Let us take a look at this using media freedom as an example.

As we have repeatedly pointed out, not least at Permanent Council meetings, France, which sets itself up as an ardent champion of human rights and freedoms, including those of journalists, has in reality for many years been in the vanguard of efforts to establish an information censorship “battle front” in Europe. Undesirable media outlets have been systematically subjected to censorship and ostracism in that country for the past many years. I would remind you that it was very much at the initiative of France that the trend towards segregation of the media into “right” and “wrong” came into vogue in the West. Moreover, France was one of the trailblazers in organizing the persecution of the Russian media and Russian journalists. This includes the outrageous discriminatory measures against reporters from Russia Today France and Sputnik France, the denial of access to press events, the closing of bank accounts and the blocking of online resources.

A further, recent example of France’s malicious actions in flagrant violation of OSCE commitments is the way in which Russian media outlets and media workers, including RIA Novosti Sport journalists, have been denied accreditation to cover the Olympic Games in Paris.

We regard such steps by the French authorities as an egregious violation of the principle of media freedom and pluralism, and also of the principle of access to information. The French public, like that of any other country in the world, must have the opportunity to obtain information from the most diverse sources, regardless of their country of origin and editorial policy.

We shall not call upon France to stop flouting its media freedom commitments – that would be pointless. We are taking note of what is going on and will use the mechanisms at our disposal to safeguard the interests of Russian media outlets and those journalists who are not yet afraid to speak up against the attitudes being imposed by Western propaganda, the main goal of which is to demonize Russia, its leadership and its people.

On the whole, we can see that the systematic erosion of OSCE commitments has become a mainstream policy line for the French Government. France has gradually turned into one of the driving forces behind the creation of new international rules in the field of human rights – of human rights *à la carte*. Moreover, France is not squeamish about meddling in the affairs of other States, telling them what to do and, on occasion, supporting actions aimed at the violent overthrow of their legitimate authorities. Do the citizens of the Fifth Republic themselves realize what the policy of their leadership has turned into? In view of the systematic choking of free speech being pursued in that country, it would seem that they will soon no longer have any opportunities to assess the situation objectively.

Thank you for your attention.