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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1379th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 June 2022

On World Refugee Day

Mr. Chairperson,

Unfortunately, today's discussion has once again been reduced to unfounded accusations against Russia, in the best tradition of the odious Ukrainian ex-ombudsperson Liudmyla Denisova. We categorically reject these baseless insinuations, which have nothing to do with the real state of affairs. Moreover, numerous journalists from Western media who have visited refugee sites in Russia have recorded quite a different picture. In particular, at the end of May, the prominent French newspaper *Le Figaro* published a detailed report on how Ukrainian displaced persons live in Russia.

In total, since the start of the special military operation, some 2 million people have been evacuated voluntarily (that is, at the request of the citizens themselves) to Russia from dangerous areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and Ukraine. More than 300,000 of them are children. There are more than 9,500 temporary accommodation centres operating in the various regions of our country. Those arriving are provided with the necessary assistance, including further accommodation and employment, places in kindergartens and educational institutions, and social benefits.

Mr. Chairperson,

Since February, members of the Western alliance of OSCE participating States have been competing with each other to demonstrate their solidarity with efforts to support Ukrainian displaced persons. Any criticism of these measures has been tabooed or attributed to "Russian propaganda". However, after just four months, there has been a dramatic reversal. Euphoria and hospitality have been replaced by fatigue and dissatisfaction among the population. This is confirmed by statements by high-ranking officials in individual countries and a proliferation of media reports.

For example, a recent issue of the weekly *Do Rzeczy*, affiliated with the Polish ruling party Law and Justice, contained an article with the telling title "The limits of hospitality". It states, in particular, the following: "Poland has passed the charity test. Nevertheless, we cannot avoid talking about the serious economic burdens Poles face. And that leads to a host of other problems." A professor at the Pedagogical

University of Kraków spoke about the abolition of benefits for Ukrainian refugees as from 1 July: “Support is over, it’s time to go back to Ukraine.”

Latvian Minister of the Interior Kristaps Eklons said on Latvijas Televīzija on 21 June that he was “tired” of Ukrainian refugees. Switzerland’s refugee reception service also records similar sentiments in the country. The situation of Ukrainians in Germany remains very difficult, as Ukrainian diplomats accredited in that country have repeatedly pointed out.

The United Kingdom’s policy towards Ukrainian migrants and refugees was very pointedly described by the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, as “callous”. How else can a proposal to deport Ukrainian and Afghan refugees to Rwanda be qualified? The British Government is not bothered by the fact that this is an expulsion to a State where an appalling genocide has taken place. The current situation in Rwanda is also far from rosy. Or is this the idea of humane treatment and respect for the rights of refugees in foggy Britain?

Not to mention that in European countries, Ukrainian girls and women face serious risks of becoming victims of trafficking in human beings or exploitation, including sexual exploitation. This is confirmed by the European Union’s own specialist agencies and the assessments in this regard by the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. In Ireland, for example, the demand for escort services of Ukrainian women has increased by 250 per cent. It is frightening to imagine the risks refugee women face in the light of such figures.

Mr. Chairperson,

Overall, the violation of the rights of refugees and migrants has been an acute issue for the European Union and its Member States since 2015. The unprecedented migration flows have been the result of the aggressive policy of the European Union and the United States of America to destabilize the situation in the Middle East and North Africa. A similar approach has been and continues to be taken by the Kyiv regime, which for eight years has pursued a policy of Ukrainian national exclusivity and superiority, and is now reaping the rewards of its own excesses.

Most of the problems in the European Union are of a chronic nature. This has been regularly pointed out by the relevant international bodies and EU agencies: overcrowding in refugee camps, difficult detention conditions for migrants, limited access to medical care, widespread deaths of asylum seekers along migration routes, violence against migrant women and girls by border or law enforcement authorities, and the recruitment of unaccompanied minors for illegal activities, including drug dealing, prostitution and begging. All this is taking place against a backdrop of rising racial and ethnic intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination against people of Asian and African descent in the recipient countries.

Moreover, a number of Western States are simply unwilling to deal with the consequences of their reckless actions. We are well aware of the concept of shared responsibility. But this is a self-serving approach, in which the interests of migrants and refugees are sacrificed for political reasons.

We call on the countries of the Western alliance to stop violating their international obligations to protect the rights of migrants and refugees and to finally start taking responsibility for their actions in the neighbouring regions.

Thank you for your attention.