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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY BY  
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1563rd MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 May 2026

**Regarding World Press Freedom Day**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are compelled to exercise our right of reply in connection with yet another round of propaganda statements made today against Russia and its allies, statements that have now become an annual occurrence. This has nothing to do with the ideals of World Press Freedom Day. Let us take a closer look.

When assessing the current situation in the field of information and communications, one has to acknowledge its continuing deterioration. At the heart of this regression lies the determination of Western countries and their satellites to thoroughly sanitize their information space and rid it of any manifestations of dissent. Complete intolerance of differing viewpoints, as a consequence of the deeply entrenched myth about their own exceptionalism, has become a recurring theme in pseudo-democracies' policies aimed at imposing totalitarian censorship, Russophobia, war propaganda and ideas regarding their superiority over the rest of the world. At the same time, hybrid aggression has been unleashed against Russia and is being waged with unrelenting intensity, aggression that is also affecting the media landscape and its digital dimension.

Violations of the professional rights of Russian journalists and media outlets by hypocritical "champions" of freedom of speech are taking on new, often loathsome forms, up to and including fabricated criminal cases against undesirable journalists and freethinkers, threats, violence and various kinds of pressure on correspondents and their families. The policy of completely severing ties with Russia and all things Russian, which is being pursued by regimes hostile to our country in the Baltic States, Moldova and Ukraine, has been enshrined in law in the form of legal provisions that suppress the Russian language and culture and the canonical Orthodox faith, and allow vandalism of memorials that are part of our heritage and the deliberate rewriting of history. One of the most recent egregious examples is the fact that the Latvian Parliament voted to increase value added tax on Russian-language newspapers and books to 21 per cent. Are these the so-called high European standards?

Representatives of the Brussels bloc, who are so fond of declaring their commitment to the principles of freedom of access to information and media pluralism at every opportunity, are once again demonstrating the exact opposite approach. Since the start of 2026 alone, at least three Russian journalists have been forced to leave EU countries after their accreditation was refused or revoked under spurious pretexts. Altogether the

list of such restrictions imposed by EU and NATO countries and other violations since 2022 is already in the hundreds. As we have repeatedly pointed out, detailed evidence of all these abuses can be found under the heading “Foreign reprisals against Russian journalists and media” on one of the main pages of the Russian Foreign Ministry’s website.

Unlike the European Union, Russia adheres to the principle of freedom of speech and does not impose unreasonable restrictions on the media. For example, contrary to the claim that Russia imposes restrictions on the activities of foreign journalists, foreign correspondents in our country, including those from States with unfriendly governments, are able to work in accordance with Russian law and carry out their professional activities. Journalists are issued with visas and accreditation, and are invited to official events. At the same time, in the event of unfriendly actions against representatives of Russian media outlets abroad, reciprocal measures will be taken targeting media workers from the respective countries in Russia.

The West’s blatant assault on the very principles of a healthy democratic society and fundamental human rights is taking place against a backdrop of unanimous silence from the relevant bodies, including the OSCE, whose duty and *raison d’être* is to counter such manifestations. These institutions also turn a blind eye to the appalling crimes committed by the Kyiv regime against the civilian population, which, under international humanitarian law, includes media workers. With rare exceptions, they prefer to ignore the deliberate killings and attacks on our country’s journalists and war correspondents, generally confining themselves to meaningless remarks and empty rhetoric. A case in point is the fact that no attention is being paid to the notorious Myrotvorets website, which contains personal information on many public figures, opinion writers and reporters deemed undesirable by the Kyiv regime. The operation of this website perfectly illustrates the value of Western standards, and the blood of the victims listed there is also on the hands of the Kyiv regime’s sponsors. For our part, we will continue to insist on a meaningful response to every instance of a crime or terrorist attack against Russian citizens.

Mr. Chairperson,

We see that international commitments on freedom of expression, equal access to information, respect for journalists’ rights and the promotion of media pluralism continue to be brazenly violated in order to serve the bloc-based military and political interests of many Western countries. The pathological hypocrisy that has been a tradition of Western liberalism is particularly striking. This is clearly evident in the faux solicitude for reporters’ rights and the double standards used in the assessment of press freedom. For this reason, Western countries cannot serve as an example of freedom of the media and have no moral right to lecture other States, let alone interfere in their internal affairs. Your freedom rankings are not worth the paper they are printed on either.

We firmly believe that the true value of World Press Freedom Day lies not in solemn speeches and statements that are divorced from reality and delivered merely to mark the occasion, but in the capacity and effectiveness of the entire international system for safeguarding this fundamental principle of the information society, without which it is impossible to ensure sustainable development and prosperity on our planet.

Thank you for your attention.