

Council of Europe
The Secretary General

Strasbourg, 14 January 2021

Dear Minister,

Let me once again thank you for the excellent meeting we had during my recent visit to Moscow. I am grateful for the spirit of openness that accompanied our conversation. In this respect, as we agreed to frankly discuss all issues, including the most difficult ones, I would like to raise a very important question. Indeed, I was informed that on 25 December 2020, the Russian authorities declared the Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe as an international Non-Governmental Organisation whose activity is "undesirable" on the territory of the Russian Federation. This development is of great concern for the Council of Europe.

I cannot stress enough how problematic is the notion that an organisation such as the Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe, closely linked to our Organisation and uniting Schools of Political Studies, aiming to organise civic education activities based on the Council of Europe's values and principles, would represent a threat to a member state of the Council of Europe. Moreover, we understand that, according to the law, Russian citizens who would participate in the activities of the Association, could risk administrative sanctions and subsequently even criminal prosecution.

The Russian Federation is a full member state of our Organisation; it participates in all our activities, sits in all the governing bodies and it has an important say in our decision making processes. We therefore find it unacceptable that an NGO linked to the Council of Europe, bringing together schools that organise activities largely funded by our Organisation, is declared "undesirable" in Russia and that the Russian citizens instead of benefitting from its activities, are exposed to a risk of criminal prosecution.

In view of the seriousness of the implications of this development for the Council of Europe, I should therefore highly appreciate receiving clarifications about the circumstances which led to this decision. I am also open to a dialogue aimed at identifying ways to redress this unfortunate situation. I reported on these developments to the Committee of Ministers and many delegations have shared my concerns. I am looking forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,


Marija Pejčinović Burić

Mr Konstantin Chuychenko
Minister of Justice
Russian Federation

F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex
France

Tel. + 33 (0) 3 88 41 20 51
+ 33 (0) 3 88 41 20 00

Fax: + 33 (0) 3 88 41 27 99
+ 33 (0) 3 88 41 27 40