



12 January 2024

## **Statement on the withdrawal of the Russian Federation from the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities**

1. It is with deep regret that the Advisory Committee takes note of the Russian Federation's decision to withdraw from the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This step deprives more than 25 million persons belonging to the Russian Federation's numerous national minorities from the protection offered by this unique international treaty.
2. The Russian Federation's withdrawal from the Framework Convention coincides with the Advisory Committee's deep concern about the situation of persons belonging to national minorities, including indigenous peoples, in the country. For instance, young men from minorities are over-represented among recruits and fatalities in the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. Persons belonging to national minorities suffer from diminishing language and education rights. The 2021 census shows a sharp decline in the number of persons speaking minority languages, and many small languages are at risk of extinction. Human rights defenders advocating for minority rights are subject to severe human rights violations, including restrictions on freedom of expression.
3. The Advisory Committee is also troubled about reports it received from representatives of Ukraine's national minorities living in Crimea and other territories under temporary control or occupation by the Russian Federation. On top of the human suffering and destruction of cultural heritage caused by the aggression, persons belonging to national minorities are exposed to human rights violations and assimilation policies by the occupying forces.
4. In line with the Council of Europe's determination to remain engaged with Russian civil society, the Advisory Committee remains available for dialogue with representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples from the Russian Federation and expresses its full solidarity with them in their continued struggle for minority rights.