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Finnish authorities' decision to separate a Russian citizen, A. Zavgorodnyaya, from her four children

Written question No. 619 to the Committee of Ministers
by Mr Alexey PUSHKOV, Russian Federation, European Democrat Group

In September 2012, four children of a Russian citizen, A. Zavgorodnyaya, – aged between one week and six years old – were taken into State custody and put in a foster home by the Finnish authorities.

An official notice received by Ms Zavgorodnyaya claimed that she and her husband posed a danger to their children, and the reason for the decision was that one of their children – Veronika – had allegedly "been spanked by her father".

Mr Pushkov,

To ask the Committee of Ministers:

– to clarify whether the above sanctions were justified or whether they were excessive and disproportionate;

– to provide the Assembly with the Committee of Minister's opinion whether the above sanctions correspond to the obligations and commitments of Finland with regard to its participation in international treaties and conventions, particularly Council of Europe conventions, concerning children's rights protection;

– to request the opinion of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights whether the above actions by the Finnish authorities fall within the conclusions made in his report (CommDH(2012)27 of 26 September 2012) following his visit to Finland from 11 to 13 June 2012, where the Commissioner claims that "…, Russian speakers appear to be the most likely victims of racism and xenophobia in Finland".