

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2015**Monday, September 21, Opening Plenary Session****Latvian delegation, Right of reply**

Mr Chair,

I would like to exercise Latvia's right of reply to the statement made by the Russian Federation.

Apparently, the Russian Federation is continuing to deliberately misinform the international community on the actual situation in Latvia. However, we are all aware that such an approach forms the basis of foreign policy of the Russian Federation. The suggestion of neo-Nazi tendencies in Latvia is just one example of this.

I would like to state once again that the Latvian authorities have consistently condemned all crimes against humanity committed by both totalitarian regimes. Latvia categorically denounces the Holocaust, mourns its victims and is strongly committed to education, remembrance and research of it.

Regarding the remarks by the Russian Federation on the restrictions of freedom of expression and the media in Latvia by referring to the recent decision by the Latvian State Enterprise Register to deny the registration of the news agency *Russia Today*. This decision was based on national normative acts and the Latvian constitution. Namely, the establishment of a *Russia Today* office in Latvia goes against Latvia's regulations on the establishment of mass media and the provisions for online media. The national regulations suggest that foreign enterprises can register in Latvia if they are subject to private law. However, the documentation received from *Russia Today* suggests that the organization operates in a public rather than private sphere. It represents the public interests of public sector representatives. The decision to deny *Russia Today's* registration can be re-appealed.

Latvia is firmly committed to the freedom of speech. The Latvian constitution states that everybody has the right to free speech, which includes the right to gain, hold and share information, and express one's opinion. Censorship is forbidden in my country.

Thank you.