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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1310th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

22 April 2021

**On combating racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination in the
post-coronavirus recovery period**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to thank our Canadian colleagues for raising this issue.

The problem of racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination is undoubtedly a pressing one and it will remain so in the post-coronavirus period. The negative trend in socio-economic indicators also attests to this. The steep decline in these indicators in most OSCE participating States during the pandemic has provided a breeding ground for negative manifestations of this kind.

When talking about racism and intolerance and also hate crimes, we should always specify exactly what we are talking about. We have already spoken here several times on the subject of anti-Semitism, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism, an upsurge in which is now being observed in a number of countries in Europe and far beyond. We will not repeat ourselves, however we note that these worrying trends have been consistently highlighted by relevant human rights bodies, including the United Nations Human Rights Council, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the Jewish non-governmental organization B'nai B'rith, the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry in Tel Aviv, and many others. The OSCE is no exception.

Particularly alarming manifestations are evident where the authorities directly condone former Nazi henchmen, elevate them to the status of national heroes and pursue policies aimed at glorifying Nazism and distorting the history of the Second World War. The seriousness and scale of the problem is evidenced by the growing support each year for the United Nations General Assembly resolution on combating the glorification of Nazism, which is initiated annually by Russia.

Intolerance and discrimination on religious grounds are also of serious concern. The rights not only of religious minorities but also of followers of world religions are being violated.

In the context of Christianity, this is often accompanied by an increase in aggressive secularism and the persistent imposition of "religious neutrality" bordering on religious intolerance. Some States allow

flagrant meddling in internal church affairs and encourage divisions. Intolerance against Muslims is also on the rise. Incitement to religious hatred on the Internet, including at the instigation or with the direct approval of officials, has become commonplace. Equally worrying is the rise in anti-Semitism, which takes various forms, including the desecration of monuments to Holocaust victims and to those who rid the world of the horrors of National Socialism, and the rise in neo-Nazi and right-wing extremist groups.

We have repeatedly stressed the importance of stepping up concerted efforts on the basis of a comprehensive approach and with equal attention to all traditional faiths. This brings us back to the need to finally carry out the instructions of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel in 2014 to elaborate declarations on combating intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and members of other religions.

The relevant OSCE structures should keep their focus of attention on this entire range of challenges and threats. The profile of the work of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office on tolerance should also be raised, including through the co-operation of our Organization with the Council of Europe in the framework of the relevant Co-ordination Group.

Thank you for your attention.