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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1095th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 April 2016

**On neo-Nazism in Latvia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to draw your attention again to the relentless attempts of a number of OSCE countries to whitewash Nazism. Clear proof of this is that Western countries kept quiet when veterans of the Latvian voluntary legion of the Waffen SS held a procession in Riga on 16 March 2016.

This is all the more reprehensible because it was the first time that a high-ranking official of the Latvian Government, speaker of the Saeima (Latvian parliament), Ināra Mūrniece, had taken part in so-called “commemorative events”. This fact proves that the Latvian authorities publicly and unashamedly exhibit a favourable attitude to neo-Nazis. Moreover, soldiers of the infamous Azov battalion, which has been wreaking havoc in Ukraine, took part in the procession. We should remind you that even in the United States Congress, Azov has been recognized as a neo-Nazi paramilitary force.

It is typical that at the same time, a group of German anti-fascists – members of the Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime, the organization of resistance veterans and the German anti-fascist league – was not allowed to enter Latvia to take part in the protest against the voluntary legion’s march.

Not only in Latvia, but also among many of our Western colleagues, it is very much in vogue to exonerate the Latvian SS members on the grounds, say, that they did not fight for Hitler nor against the anti-Hitler coalition, but “solely against the USSR and the communist regime”. These fantasists on this historical subject should start reading the documents of the Nuremberg trials.

One other assertion is that the Latvian SS members “fought for their country’s independence”. This statement does not stand up to criticism either. There was never an independent Latvia under the Nazis and there never could have been one. There was one territory under the Reichskommissariat called “Ostland”.

The relaxed attitude to the glorification of Nazis and to marches by veterans of the Waffen SS legion gives their followers a sense of impunity. Time and again, both in the OSCE and in other international platforms, we have warned that tolerance of neo-Nazism leads to tragedy. We can already see an example of this in one of the participating States, where nationalists are torturing, shooting and burning people en masse for their views, while tending to try to shift all of the blame onto others.

In spite of the warning which we sounded here in this room on 3 March 2016, the Latvian authorities have not found a way to disavow the glorification of the war criminals and their supporters. It would be interesting to hear the comments of the European Union on this topic.

Thank you for your attention.