

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE AT THE 951st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 May 2013

Regarding Victory Day

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, I should like to read out a joint statement in connection with the 68th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945.

On 8 and 9 May, an important holiday – the 68th anniversary of the Victory over fascism – will be observed in many OSCE participating States. For our countries and peoples, it is the sacred Day of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945.

We are convinced that Victory Day will remain forever in the memory of mankind as the momentous date when the world and Europe were saved from fascism. The peoples of our countries played an incontestable and decisive role in crushing fascism. Today we are filled with pride as we contemplate this heroic page in our common history, and the great Victory which is our joint heritage.

This date reminds us of the great achievement of the peoples of our countries and of all those who fought against fascism – of their unparalleled heroism, the harsh ordeals which they had to endure, and the tens of millions who, at the cost of their lives, defended freedom and independence and who saved many of the world's countries from fascist enslavement.

We bow our heads before the veterans who, through their feats in battle, brought Victory, and before those who toiled on the home front and who spared no effort to make that Victory possible.

Today we also remember with gratitude our allies in the anti-Hitler coalition, and we shall never forget their contribution to our common Victory. We pay tribute to the valour of the anti-fascists in other countries, to the millions of people of different faiths and nationalities who perished in the fascist concentration camps and torture chambers, and to the victims of the blockades and deprivations.

Our common duty is to preserve the hallowed memory of all victims of fascism, to protect their burial places and the monuments and memorial sites dedicated to them and to prevent their desecration, and to jointly counter any attempts to whitewash the crimes of the Nazis and their henchmen, who were condemned by the Nuremberg Tribunal.

This anniversary of the Victory over fascism reminds us of the need to prevent a similar catastrophe from happening again. Now as never before, it is important for the international community, including the OSCE participating States, to join hands in combating new threats and challenges, in particular the rise of manifestations of neo-Nazi ideology, aggressive nationalism, extremism and xenophobia. We must also take concrete joint steps, among other things, within the framework of the Helsinki+40 process, to implement the strategic goal decided on by our Heads of State or Government at the OSCE Summit in Astana, namely, building a comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security community throughout our shared OSCE area, free of dividing lines, conflicts, spheres of influence and zones with different levels of security.

Mr. Chairperson,

Victory Day on 9 May is a holiday and a non-working day for a number of OSCE participating States. During this day, special events are held in which the employees of many delegations and their families participate. This being the case, we call for 9 May to be included in the list of OSCE official holidays and non-working days.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.