

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 950th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 May 2013

**Regarding the rise in manifestations of racism,
xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism in the OSCE area**

Mr. Chairperson,

The rise in manifestations of racism, xenophobia, violent extremism, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism poses a real threat to the security and stability of the entire OSCE region. For this reason, combating these threats is one of the most important tasks of the OSCE and its executive structures. This activity is based on numerous commitments made within the framework of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

The desecration on 17 April of a burial ground and memorial to soldiers and liberators in Panevėžys, Lithuania, is yet another reason to recall once again within the OSCE the need for stepped-up efforts to prevent and stop the spread of such unacceptable practices. It is especially shocking that this sacrilegious act was carried out during the run-up to the celebration of the victory over fascism. Unfortunately, vandalism against monuments to anti-fascist soldiers and Holocaust victims, and the desecration of military burial grounds and Jewish cemeteries, are becoming widespread in other OSCE countries as well.

Such trends, against the backdrop of the general rise in racist, anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi acts in a whole range of OSCE countries, are highly disturbing symptoms. The historical myth-making aimed at justifying contemporary political nationalism and radicalism is also unacceptable.

Such examples are not rare. We have spoken about them repeatedly in the OSCE Permanent Council in connection with a whole range of European Union (EU) countries. Marches by young neo-Nazis, attacks on immigrants and Jews, racist and neo-Nazi websites and publication of the works of ideologues of Nazi movements are no longer isolated incidents. This dangerous disease is spreading like an epidemic. Alas, those afflicted by it are not only young democratic States, but old European ones as well, which one would think should have developed the necessary immunity.

The inclusion within parliamentary ranks of parties with nationalistic leanings is further evidence of the growing radicalization of opinion among certain segments of the European population, in EU countries among others.

It is especially worrisome that society, above all the young generation, perceives the lack of a distinct response and actions by the authorities in a whole range of OSCE participating States as tacit agreement on their part with such negative phenomena. Also disturbing is the emerging “fashion” for the authorities to justify their inaction through references to ensuring other rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and the like.

In this context, we should like to recall the tragic lessons of the twentieth century, when the lack of a reaction by the world community to the events of “Kristallnacht” led as a result to the greatest tragedy of humankind and to the millions of innocent victims of Nazism.

Today, therefore, actions taken by the authorities in response to manifestations of racism, anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism acquire special significance. Actions such as the ten-year prison sentence handed down by an Austrian court to the well-known ultra-right-wing activist, Gottfried Küssel, for spreading Nazi ideology on the Internet, and the fine imposed by a court in Liverpool, United Kingdom, on the producer and founder of the music club The Picket, Phil Hayes, for making racist and anti-Semitic statements, can serve as definite reference points. Such decisions serve as a serious warning to representatives of radical groupings and tendencies.

At the same time, the task of shaping public opinion, and fostering tolerance and the ability to evaluate information objectively among young people, who are especially vulnerable to the influence of radical and extremist tendencies, is a matter of priority.

We call upon OSCE participating States to harshly condemn and thoroughly investigate all incidents involving manifestations of racism, neo-Nazi leanings, aggressive nationalism, and ethnic and religious intolerance. Russia, for its part, is open to dialogue and ready to share its experience in combating manifestations of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and aggressive nationalism.