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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1367th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 April 2022

On gross violations of the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population in some OSCE participating States in overt disregard for international law and international legal instruments

Mr. Chairperson,

At the last Permanent Council meeting, we raised the question of gross violations of the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population in some OSCE participating States in the light of our Organization's commitments. In response, we have heard many things – ill-suited quotations from the great classics of Russian literature, attempts to deny the obvious facts of the oppression of Russians and Russian speakers, and outrageous rants blaming Russia itself for what is happening. And this at a time when Canada, the United States of America, the European Union as a whole and its Member States are fuelling Russophobic sentiments on an unprecedented scale, condoning various Russophobic actions and blithely turning a blind eye to the admission of hate speech in all societal and social strata. The most vulnerable – women, minors, national minorities, ethnic groups and so on – are the first to suffer because of these sentiments.

Western representatives stop at nothing in their anti-Russian fervour. They wilfully disregard not only the fundamental principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but also their international legal obligations. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The first document enshrines the equality of all persons before the law and states that “the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

This raises the question as to how the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany comply with these obligations when there are numerous cases of violations of the rights of Russian-speaking citizens recorded in the public domain every day. I am referring to the dissemination of “hate letters” and vandalism of Russian shops or cars with Russian number plates. More than 380 crimes against people of Russian origin have been documented in Germany since 24 February. These figures were cited by the head of the German

Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Nancy Faeser. Most of these incidents involve insults and damage to property, but there are also acts of violence. They include arson attacks on schools, the denial by some medical institutions of medical care to Russian and Russian-speaking patients, and the refusal of admission to some restaurants. It is not only citizens of Russia or ethnic Russians who are discriminated against, but even Russian-speaking citizens of Germany such as Russia Germans.

Russian natives living in Finland also report ethnic harassment on a massive scale, and are afraid to speak their native language in public because they hear disapprobation, insults and even death threats in response.

Children in some OSCE participating States have been subjected to real bullying. According to public sources, this is happening, in particular, in the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The question arises as to how humiliation, abuse and even beatings in schools, psychological pressure, and the creation of conditions that impede the full learning process can be reconciled with international legal obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. After all, this instrument, to which 196 States have acceded, contains an obligation for States to take measures to protect minors from all forms of discrimination, punishment, physical or mental violence, abuse or maltreatment. It clearly spells out the need to ensure the safety of girls and boys, including their survival and development. Why does Ms. Rita Iszák-Ndiaye, Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Children and Security, say nothing?

Speaking of the phenomenon of anti-Russian hatred, it is impossible not to mention the campaign to eliminate the presence of Russia and all things Russian in the global information space. Although it started long before the special operation in Ukraine, the segregation of alternative sources has now reached its peak. Russian journalists are banned from expressing their point of view and Russian-speaking residents of some OSCE countries are denied the right to access information in their native language. For example, the European Union and some other OSCE countries have banned the Sputnik agency and the Russia Today television channel from broadcasting on their territories. Moreover, access to their resources online is blocked by major Internet platforms. As usual, the three Baltic States have been the most zealous in the crackdown on the Russian-language press. There, in addition to the media outlets mentioned earlier, some 28 television channels, including NTV, Mir, RBC, RTVi and the entertainment channels TNT and STS, are unable to operate. In short, the aim is clear – to stifle any Russian-language sources of information.

I recall that Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that “[e]veryone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers”

A number of US social media platforms have also eagerly joined the virulent Russophobia campaign. For example, Meta (Facebook and Instagram) stated that, in the context of the situation in Ukraine, it would not prohibit its users from calling for violence against Russians and Russian soldiers.

In that connection, the safety of Russian-speaking journalists and civil society activists is of great concern. The non-governmental organization Unkremlin e.V., which operates in the Federal Republic of Germany and is known for its Russophobic views, has posted on social media the addresses of Russian journalists living in Berlin and photographs of their homes, urging Ichkerians seeking refuge in Germany to make a note of them.

Latvia has launched a counterpart to the notorious Ukrainian website Myrotvorets (Peacemaker), which publishes photos and personal data of residents of that country having the imprudence to express support for Russia’s special operation in Ukraine. The creators of the portal refer to them as “anti-Latvian

provocateurs” and “propagandists of the Russian world”. This electronic database of “enemies of the people” already includes 112 inhabitants of the Republic, including the entire Russian Union party.

We regret to note that the OSCE executive structures, above all the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, are turning a blind eye to the widespread Russophobia. Apparently, those in charge are too busy preparing and spreading fake news on their social media about Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine. Another executive structure of our Organization, the Representative on Freedom of the Media Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, is also in an anti-Russian frenzy and cannot objectively perform in good faith the functions entrusted to her by all the participating States.

We call on the OSCE participating States to stop neglecting their international legal obligations and to finally start taking practical steps to counter the Russophobic hysteria.

Thank you for your attention.