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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1180th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 March 2018

**On the glorification of Nazism in Latvia**

Mr. Chairperson,

At the Permanent Council meeting on 15 March, we drew the participating States' attention to the marches by Waffen SS veterans and their young radical supporters, which take place every year on 16 March in Riga. Regrettably, this year was no exception. Nazi accomplices and their followers again marched through the Latvian capital's streets. What's more, these gatherings, which are a disgrace for any civilized country, were attended by officials, including the Speaker of the Saeima Ināra Mūrniece and a number of members of the Latvian Parliament (Raivis Dzintars, Imants Parādnieks, Ritvars Jansons, Einārs Cilinskis, Jānis Dombrava, Jānis Iesalnieks and others) and Minister of Justice Dzintars Rasnačs and other members of the Government. And yet our distinguished Latvian colleague stated last Thursday that Latvian officials would not take part in these events.

We have already said very clearly that any forms of honouring the Nazis are an insult to their victims' memory and contradict Latvia's international obligations and the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly against glorification of Nazism, to which the overwhelming majority of countries give their support every year.

We hope that the OSCE participating States and relevant institutions will make an objective assessment of events in Latvia. Regrettably, we have not seen an appropriate response by the European Union leadership, which amounts to its indulging glorification of the Nazi past in some EU Member States.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to comment on a number of the points raised by our distinguished Latvian colleague at the last meeting of the Permanent Council.

Let me begin with his argument that the Latvian legionnaires were supposedly drafted by force into the SS and that Latvia did not participate as a State in the Second World War. Mr. Ambassador, people who had been drafted by force into an organization declared

criminal by the Nuremberg Tribunal would hardly be proud of this fact and demand honours, but those who take part in the marches in Riga openly flaunt their former service with the Nazis.

The assertion that the Latvian SS men were “fighting for their country’s independence” also holds no water. I remind you that no Nazi German official ever stated the possibility for any sort of autonomy for Lithuania, Latvia or Estonia within a so-called “Greater Germany”, let alone independence. The Latvian legionnaires fought not for their country but for the Third Reich, and they swore an oath to Hitler personally. This is despite the well-known fact that the Nazi ideologues of racial superiority destined the peoples of these republics for enslavement.

Regarding the so-called “Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact”, let me remind you that this Soviet-German non-aggression pact was signed on 23 August 1939. The Soviet Union was practically the last country to sign such an agreement with Germany and it did so only because by that time it had no choice. But our distinguished colleague has, it seems, forgotten or simply does not want to remember that this agreement was preceded by the Munters-Ribbentrop Pact, which was signed on 7 June 1939.

Finally, on the question of “Soviet occupation”, international legal doctrine of the mid-twentieth century defined the term “occupation” as a temporary situation during armed conflict when the forces of one of the warring parties occupy the territory of another State. But the Soviet Union and the Baltic States were not in a state of war. Deployment of Red Army units on their territories was carried out on the basis of agreements and with the clear consent of these countries’ governments. Let me remind you also that throughout the Baltic States’ existence as part of the Soviet Union, with the exception of the German occupation period, their national governments continued to function on their territory.

Thank you for your attention.