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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1164th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 November 2017

**In response to the address by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the
Council of Europe, Mr. Nils Muižnieks**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Muižnieks,

We welcome your attendance at this meeting of the Permanent Council, which is particularly symbolic on the International Day for Tolerance. We listened to your statement with interest. We appreciate the Council of Europe as an independent forum in which the interests of all Member States should be considered in equal measure. It is essential to work in a depoliticized manner without a selective approach and to keep in mind the need to preserve the civilizational identity of Europe. It is important not to undermine the Council of Europe's leading position in the creation of a single legal and humanitarian space on the continent.

Unfortunately, Europe is not currently in the best of shape because of the growth in manifestations of racism, extremism and radical nationalistic attitudes. The glorification of Nazi accomplices and the cultivation of the seeds of neo-Nazism, which some countries on the continent are so fascinated with, is extremely dangerous. Xenophobia and religious intolerance are on the rise. There are serious shortcomings in safeguarding the rights of children, including child migrants and the children of "non-citizens". The chronic problems of statelessness are being supplemented by new challenges connected with the influx of migrants.

The work of the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights could ease the pressure of these challenges, but only by way of an objective and equal approach to the various aspects of the human rights situation in all countries of the Council of Europe without exception.

The reality, alas, is different. It would seem that in some cases the Commissioner uses a magnifying glass, looking out for the slightest shortcomings, but in others shies away from recognizing the real scale of problems that have remained unresolved for years.

Unfortunately, this approach is also extremely widespread in the work of the OSCE's humanitarian institutions.

There have been no clear systemic efforts to date to defend national minorities and their language rights and to eradicate the shameful phenomenon of mass statelessness. The clear and unambiguous warnings concerning the inadmissibility of State policies in a number of countries regarding the glorification of Nazis and their accomplices, the desecration and destruction of memorials to those who fell fighting Nazism, and the persecution of veterans who fought on the side of the anti-Hitler coalition are going unheard. Once again we urge you not to close your eyes to the intolerable situation in this regard in Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Without the toleration of the radicals, we would not be faced with a crisis in Ukraine of such proportions whose consequences will have to be dealt with by all of Europe for years to come. It is impossible to remain indifferent to the massive number of illegal activities and crimes committed by the Ukrainian security forces and nationalists. Much more attention should be paid to the administration of justice in Ukraine. The tragedy of the mass incineration of people in Odessa in May 2014, whose scale is unprecedented in the recent history of the European continent, has still not been investigated. The pressure exerted by the radicals on the court is all-pervasive.

The odious Ukrainian law on education directly and grossly violates a whole series of international commitments undertaken by Ukraine. The new Ukrainian legislation in the sphere of education, along with the language quota on radio and television and restrictions on guest appearances by Russian cultural figures look quite simply like an attempt to establish a mono-ethnic State by force and a violation of the rights of millions of citizens of Ukraine. Particular mention should be made of the restrictions on the activities of Russian journalists in Ukraine, many of whom are not only barred from entering the country or refused accreditation but are also in danger of their lives. We expect a more resolute and visible reaction to these flagrant offences by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights.

We remain convinced of the possibility of constructing a single legal and humanitarian space on the European continent. The Russian Federation believes that the Council of Europe plays an important role as a humanitarian support for the entire European security architecture. We take the position that your work, distinguished Commissioner, can make a practical contribution to the creation of a community without dividing lines. We share the basic principles underlying your mandate. We are willing to support your work, which should be conducted on the basis of political neutrality, objectiveness and the non-application of double standards.

Thank you for your attention.