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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1252nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 December 2019

**On the address by Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General
of the Council of Europe**

Mr. Chairperson,
Madam Secretary General,

We are pleased to welcome you to this meeting of the Permanent Council.

The Russian Federation has traditionally been in favour of strengthening the role of the Council of Europe, one of the most authoritative and representative international organizations on the European continent, helping to consolidate the unity of the humanitarian and legal space from Lisbon to Vladivostok. The Council of Europe's unique system of convention mechanisms serves to strengthen democracy and the protection of human rights and the rule of law, and effectively promotes the development of intercultural dialogue, including its religious dimension.

At the same time, there is a growing erosion of the fundamental values of European civilization. Xenophobia, religious intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and members of other confessions are becoming a grim new reality. Manifestations of racism and extremism are on the rise, and there is an increase in radical nationalist sentiments.

These worrying trends in a number of countries are already being transformed into open glorification of Nazi accomplices and support for neo-Nazism at the State level. The desecration and destruction of monuments to those who fell in the fight against Nazism and persecution of veterans of the anti-Hitler coalition have become commonplace in Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, as well as a number of other countries. The attack on the freedom of the media and the linguistic, educational and religious rights of national minorities continues.

We believe that the Council of Europe should more closely monitor and react immediately to the infringements of the rights of the Russian-speaking population and national minorities in Ukraine and the oppression of the Russian language in the Baltic States, where the shameful status of "non-citizens" continues to exist. The proliferation of discriminatory laws in these countries runs counter to international standards and commitments. In that connection, I should like to draw attention to the conclusion of the

Venice Commission of 9 December 2019, No. 960/2019 (Opinion No. 960/2019), on the discriminatory Ukrainian law on the State language.

The new challenges require us to be open-minded and to take co-ordinated steps to remedy the situation. There is a need to eliminate double standards and to seek a depoliticized approach to the existential development issues of our societies. Russia suggests a united front to defend Europe's spiritual and moral heritage and its historical traditions. We support all those who work to preserve the integrity of the international human rights architecture and to return to unconditional respect for the equality of States on the basis of the principles of equal and indivisible security.

We see potential for co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, notably through the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe and the relevant OSCE executive structures. We believe that the activities of the two pan-European organizations should be closely co-ordinated in order to avoid duplication and unnecessary dissipation of resources. Among the practical areas of interaction between the two organizations, in addition to the tasks already mentioned, is the fight against terrorism. At the same time, it is important for such co-operation to be transparent and collegial.

In conclusion, Madam Secretary General, I should like to thank you for your personal contribution to strengthening the unity of the legal space of the European continent and assure you that steps to promote the unifying agenda will always enjoy the support of the Russian Federation.

Thank you for your attention.