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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1101st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 May 2016

On the ban on the Russian media in Latvia

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to draw attention to the latest measures by the authorities in Latvia to exclude Russian media from the media landscape in that country.

Having banned the rebroadcasting and distribution of programmes by the Rossiya-RTR television station for six months, the Latvian National Electronic Mass Media Council (NEPLP) is now setting about the television station NTV Mir.

The Council's monitoring centre stated that on 20 April 2016 NTV Mir, which is accessible to Latvian viewers, showed an episode of *The Meeting Place* on the resurgence of Nazism in Europe. The discussions were accompanied by a number of reports, in one of which Ināra Mūrniece, speaker of the Saeima (Latvian Parliament), was characterized as being sympathetic to neo-Nazis. Journalists stated that on 16 March 2016 Ms. Mūrniece took part in a parade by legionnaires of the Waffen-SS (which is true) and laid flowers on the graves of Nazis. According to the NEPLP, the facts were presented in a manifestly dishonest manner with a view to conveying a biased representation of the subject of the programme. This is a clear attempt at obfuscation.

The Council also asked the United Kingdom's Office of Communications (Ofcom) to review possible violations of the law by this Russian station, since the NTV Mir channel rebroadcast in Latvia is under British jurisdiction.

This decision by the NEPLP is the latest in a series of measures by the Latvian authorities to restrict Russian media in Latvia for political reasons. The watchdog is deliberately concentrating on the monitoring of Russian media while persistently ignoring the distortion of facts and blatant doublespeak by Latvian television stations, including public television, which by law should be subject to priority and more detailed scrutiny. In this way, the Council, which is meant to be independent, is in fact demonstrating its lack of autonomy and desire to act as a stooge for specific political forces.

We call on the Latvian Government to stop violating the commitments undertaken within the OSCE regarding freedom and pluralism of the media. We also urge the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, to respond to this situation.

Thank you for your attention.