

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 959th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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**Regarding the increase in racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and
neo-Nazism in the OSCE area**

Mr. Chairperson,

Combating manifestations of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism is one of the most important tasks of the OSCE and its executive structures. Over the past 20 years we have adopted dozens of commitments within the OSCE. It would seem that there are international instruments, the corresponding national legislation has been developed in many countries and the work of law enforcement authorities has been stepped up. Civil society is actively involved in combating these negative phenomena. However, the situation is not improving.

According to a recent survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 12 per cent of the persons questioned in Europe had been victims of racism-related violence and 37 per cent had been subjected to discrimination. Owing to the rise in anti-Semitism, between 40 and 50 per cent of the Jewish population of France, Belgium and Hungary are seriously considering emigration.

We shall outline briefly just a few of the recent instances of racism, anti-Semitism and anti-Christian sentiment in the western part of the OSCE area.

Police in the Belgian town of Aartselaar ignored complaints by Jewish residents about their neighbours' anti-Semitic outbursts over a period of two weeks. Only after Ruth Sverdloff, a former Israeli citizen, had complained to an Antwerp newspaper that the police were refusing to do anything about the fact that her girlfriend had been beaten up did an official investigation begin.

In the early hours of 7 June unknown persons desecrated St. Stephen's Cathedral in Limoges. The vandals wrote "church law is sharia law" on the walls of the thirteenth-century church. Nantes Cathedral was desecrated on 8 June. The signs left on the church's walls by the vandals were typical for members of Nazi or satanic groups. In Bordeaux the Catholic bookshop *Livres en Famille* has already suffered 27 attacks at the hands of vandals. What is

more, the French press, which was so indignant at the recent acts of vandalism committed by opponents of marriage for all, has said practically nothing about the devastation inflicted on the Christian churches.

These dangerous trends have also spread across the ocean. In mid-June, an 18-year-old youth broke into a garage belonging to a Jewish family in Toronto, Canada, and painted Nazi swastikas and anti-Semitic insults on the walls and doors. The criminal has now been arrested.

In early June, in Suffolk (in the state of New York) an unknown biker, presumably a member of a neo-Nazi youth group, sprayed Nazi swastikas and Stars of David on the walls of a golf club. On 24 June, unknown persons sprayed the words "kill the Jews" next to a Jewish school and synagogue in a Jewish quarter of the New York borough of Queens.

This is not the first time that we are raising this subject at the Permanent Council. Civil society representatives have been trying to draw the OSCE's attention to the threat posed by resurgent Nazi ideology for many years now. This begs the question what else has to happen in Europe and on the American continent, how many new bloody clones of Breivik must appear before we all finally acknowledge the unacceptability of justifying the acts of neo-Nazis by their right to freedom of assembly and association and join forces to foster a rejection within society of extreme right-wing views and ideologies. These are just some facts.

We call on the participating States not only to roundly condemn and carefully investigate all cases of racist or neo-Nazi sentiment, aggressive nationalism and ethnic or religious intolerance, but also to make more active use of the opportunities and instruments provided by the OSCE for developing a long-term strategy and effective mechanisms to combat these dangerous tendencies. For its part, Russia is open to dialogue and ready to share its experience in this area.

Thank you for your attention.