

PC.DEL/528/17

28 April 2017

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1143rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 April 2017

On the statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the CIS Member States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance towards Christians, Muslims and representatives of other religions

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to draw colleagues' attention to the statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the CIS Member States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance towards Christians, Muslims and representatives of other religions, adopted on 7 April 2017 in Tashkent. As the current holder of the Chairmanship of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Russian Federation is authorized to distribute the text of the document to the OSCE, which it did on 18 April.

Condemning all manifestations of intolerance, discrimination, violence and terrorist acts against Christians, Muslims and representatives of other religions, the Ministers expressed concern over the growing number of such incidents in various regions of the world. The statement calls on political, religious and community leaders to continue working to prevent and combat intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and members of other faiths, with full respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights. In this regard, the importance of mutual tolerance and respect between people who profess a religion and those who do not, the dialogue between various religious organizations, the prevention of religious and other fanaticism and extremism and the incitement of hostility between different faiths was noted. At the same time, it is stressed that terrorist acts committed by individuals or groups that associate themselves with certain religions or beliefs cannot serve as an excuse for religious intolerance.

We are convinced that this statement is particularly relevant against the background of disturbing trends in the growth of aggressive nationalism, racism, discrimination, xenophobia and other radical ideologies observed in the OSCE area. Our Organization should not remain aloof from the struggle against such phenomena. In this context, we note the conference held last year under the auspices of the German Chairmanship to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and Christians. We would welcome the continuation of this practice. We also see opportunities for enhancing the activities of the three Personal

Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on intolerance and non-discrimination. We also believe that it is time to finally carry out the instructions of the 2014 Basel Ministerial Declaration on Enhancing Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism and to adopt the Ministerial Council Declarations on combating intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and members of other religions. We call on the Austrian Chairmanship to continue the efforts undertaken in this regard by the Serbian and German Chairmanships, and to promote the adoption of the above-mentioned declarations at the Ministerial Council meeting in Vienna in December.

I have the honour to report that Tajikistan aligned itself with this statement.

Thank you for your attention.