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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1221st MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 March 2019

**On the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

Mr. Chairperson,

Combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance remains one of the most relevant focuses in the OSCE's human rights activities.

At the same time, there are serious differences among the participating States in our Organization regarding the interpretation of the problem and ways of dealing with it. The absence of actions to curb manifestations of racism and intolerance is justified by reference to the supposedly absolute nature of the right to freedom of expression. There are attempts to falsify the history of the Second World War and to exonerate those who created and implemented the theory of racial superiority. Such activities by certain States are irresponsible and incompatible with international commitments, giving rise to a generation in Europe that is ignorant of the truth about the most terrible war in the history of humanity and the nature, for example, of the SS units, an organization recognized as criminal by the Nuremberg Tribunal.

A clear example of this is the situation in the Baltic States, where the practice of honouring veterans of the Waffen-SS and collaborators of various types has become commonplace. Those who assisted the Nazis and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity are declared "heroes" and members of national liberation movements. Marches and gatherings by SS legionnaires and their supporters take place on a regular basis. The "war" continues on memorials and monuments to those who liberated Europe and the whole world from Nazism and fascism and from racially and ethnically motivated genocide. Unfortunately, a similar "campaign" against memorials to liberator soldiers is also taking place in Poland.

The authorities in Ukraine are continuing to deliberately distort the history of the country and to turn it into a mono-ethnic State with its memory "wiped clean". Historical revisionism taken as the basis for government policy contributes directly to the rapid spread in Ukraine of aggressive nationalism, xenophobia and neo-Nazism. Young people marching through the streets of Ukrainian cities glorify the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, which participated in the brutal mass murder of Jews and members of other nationalities. With the complicity of law enforcement agencies, war memorials are defiled and veterans who fought against the Nazis are abused.

Against this backdrop, the problem of defending the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups, particularly their linguistic and educational rights, in the Baltic countries and Ukraine is becoming critical. Measures taken in those areas can only be described as discriminatory. Moreover, in Ukraine the Russian language – the language of the absolute majority of the population – is in fact discriminated against twice over, in relation not only to Ukrainian but also to the languages of the Member States of the European Union. This situation is unacceptable and flies in the face of Ukraine’s international commitments.

The “First Nations” continue to experience difficulties in Canada, where the oppression of Indian and Arctic Inuit tribes is systematic.

For the most part, the United States of America prefers to ignore its own long standing “racial” problems while at the same time attempting to preach to others. According to Amnesty International, black Americans are five times more likely to be shot by police officers. In the estimation of US human rights activists, out of over 900 hate groups in the country, almost 600 or two thirds – including the Ku Klux Klan, neo Nazis, “white nationalists” and skinheads – incite intolerance on the basis of race or skin colour.

Things are also amiss in the so-called old democracies in Europe. According to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, anti-Semitism is growing rapidly in Belgium, France and Germany and is also prominent in the United Kingdom and Poland.

Mr. Chairperson,

On the initiative of Russia and a number of other countries, including OSCE participating States, the United Nations General Assembly every year adopts a resolution by an overwhelming majority against the glorification of Nazism. The number of co-sponsors is steadily growing. Only the United States and Ukraine vote against it year after year, while the countries of the EU abstain. We urge our colleagues finally to face up to the truth and reconsider their attitude to this resolution and also to take determined measures to eliminate any manifestations in their countries of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The International Year dedicated to combating these manifestations offers a good incentive to move from words to action.

Thank you for your attention.