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**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1098th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 April 2016

**In connection with the 30th anniversary of the accident at the
Chernobyl nuclear power plant**

Mr. Chairperson,

On 26 April 2016, it was 30 years to the day since the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, one of the biggest man-made disasters of the twentieth century, which led to the radioactive contamination of a significant portion of the territories of present-day Belarus, Russia and Ukraine and to countless fatalities among the populations of those republics. Hundreds of thousands of citizens of the USSR were recruited to mitigate the consequences of the accident; many did so at the cost of their lives. The Soviet people forestalled the further spread of radioactive emissions to the territory of Western and Central Europe.

Many international organizations issued declarations on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl tragedy. It is a pity that the OSCE – the largest regional organization on the Eurasian continent – could not reach consensus on a similar declaration, owing to the position taken by a number of participating States which insisted on the inclusion of a paragraph factually misrepresenting the role and mandate of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the field of nuclear security and the physical protection of nuclear facilities and material. Tragedy should not be politicized.

The Russian Federation is continuing the efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, which spilled over to more than 59,000 square kilometres of Russian territory, inhabited by over 3 million people. The situation with regard to radiation is monitored constantly; medical care for citizens living in the affected territories, those who participated in the clean-up efforts after the accident, and their families, is improving, along with their social conditions; and steps are being taken to rehabilitate agricultural and forest lands. The latter component is an integral part of the federal programmes covering more than 1 million citizens of our country.

It is clear that the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes places a heavy responsibility on the owners and operators of the corresponding infrastructure. In this

connection, the deteriorating state of affairs with regard to nuclear security in Ukraine is a cause for serious concern. For example, Ukrainian nuclear power plants are switching to the use of unauthorized nuclear fuel produced by the American company Westinghouse, without involving the facilities' designers or engineers. Despite a colossal investment of resources, since decommissioning started at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 2000, work has not been completed on erecting a permanent sarcophagus over the fourth power-generating unit and the reactors that were shut down have not been decommissioned. Of the 15 reactors operating in Ukraine, 13 have exhausted their service life or will do so in the next few years. And in these conditions, the decision is being taken to manipulate the capacity of a number of nuclear power plants. Particularly worrying is the opening of a pan-European nuclear waste repository in the Chernobyl exclusion zone.

All of this, in our opinion, poses the serious threat of nuclear accidents that would result in the radioactive contamination on a massive scale of the territory of Ukraine, neighbouring countries and Europe as a whole. It is strange that this situation elicits no concern on the part of the European Union.

Thank you for your attention.