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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
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AT THE 1185th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 May 2018

On Europe Day and the glorification of Nazism

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, we should like to emphasize that the celebration of Europe Day and its very existence in the calendar would not have been possible in principle without the victory in the Second World War over fascism and Nazism – the Great Victory, whose historical significance people are now attempting to assign to oblivion through their endeavours to rewrite history. Meanwhile, neo-Nazism is on the rise in Europe, and not only there, and is once again threatening the pillars of democracy.

For example, the Ukrainian representatives continue to promulgate the slogan “Ukraine is Europe”. But what do they do for peace and unity in Europe? We would remind you that Ukraine is the only OSCE participating State in which Nazi units such as the Right Sector have been incorporated into the security forces. Neo-Nazi formations are still active in the country. Swastikas and other Nazi symbols are commonplace, torchlit processions are organized and monuments to Soviet warriors defiled. The fact that all these manifestations have become everyday occurrences in Ukraine is a slap in the face to the historical memory of the Ukrainian people, who suffered immense losses in the course of the Great Patriotic War.

Against this background, the authorities in Kyiv continue their deliberate policy of falsifying the country’s recent history. The Ukrainian authorities are attempting to whitewash accomplices of the Nazis and war criminals – members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army – and to present them as freedom fighters. These people have thousands of deaths and civilian martyrs on their conscience. The “bloodstained idols” of Ukrainian nationalism, such as Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych, are persistently foisted on society as guides to morality.

Serious concern is prompted by the aggressive growth in the influence of modern-day advocates of fascists from groups such as C14, Brotherhood, Right Sector, White Hammer, National Corps or Svoboda.

This year the celebration of Victory Day was once again overshadowed by the actions of the law enforcement agencies and the antics of hooligans. Nationalists and local radicals regularly do their utmost to disrupt commemorative acts like the march of the Immortal Regiment (no one is forgotten, nothing is forgotten), insult veterans, throw stones and smoke bombs at people and shout nationalist slogans. Such incidents have occurred in Ukraine before, and to our great regret this year was no exception.

In the night of 8–9 May, vandals daubed provocative slogans on a wall near the Monument of Eternal Glory in Dnipro. In the morning of 9 May, radicals from the Ukrainian nationalist organization C14 attacked Konstantin Vorobev, head of the Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Kyiv. The National Corps picketed the television station Inter after the announcement of a gala concert to commemorate Victory Day. Radicals even threatened to burn down the station. And how did OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Mr. Harlem Désir react to all this? In Kyiv, nationalists got into a fight with participants in the Immortal Regiment event. During the 9 May march in Zhytomyr an unknown person started a fight after running out with a flag with the inscription “To Moscow!”. Scuffles broke out between police and participants in the Immortal Regiment event in Melitopol, after police demanded the removal of the ribbons of Saint George. Similar incidents took place in Kyiv, Odessa and Dnipro.

For detailed information about the glorification of Nazism in Ukraine we refer to the report on neo-Nazism by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, which was recently posted on the Ministry website.

We once again urge supporters of Kyiv in the West to exert pressure on Ukraine to rectify the situation, and the OSCE and its specialist bodies to pay particular attention to this question and to react appropriately to any manifestations of neo-Nazism and radical nationalism in Ukraine.

Nazism is also rearing its head in other States in the OSCE area. A march by veterans of the Latvian Volunteer Legion of the Waffen-SS took place yet again in Latvia on 16 March. A conciliatory attitude to the glorification of Nazis and the SS Legion marches is dangerous and short-sighted inasmuch as it could lead to new tragedies. Estonia is another example. Every year in that country a gathering is organized of veterans of the 20th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS and its supporters, and monuments are erected to Nazi criminals.

According to US American human rights activists, there are over 900 hate groups in the United States of America inciting intolerance on the grounds of religion, race or gender identity. Specifically, there are 130 groups supporting the Ku Klux Klan, 99 neo-Nazi organizations, over 100 white nationalist associations, 78 skinhead groups, and so on. The majority embrace the Nazi ideology to a greater or lesser extent. Many openly use Nazi symbols or slogans, since these are not banned in the United States. This might explain why the representatives of the United States and Ukraine are the only two OSCE participating States to traditionally oppose the United Nations General Assembly resolution combating the glorification of Nazism.

We are convinced of the particular relevance and significance of concerted efforts to combat the rise of Nazism in the context of celebrating peace and unity of the countries of Europe.

Thank you for your attention.