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**STATEMENT BY
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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1523rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

5 June 2025

**On the situation in a number of countries regarding the desecration and
destruction of monuments dedicated to those who fought against Nazism during the
Second World War**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are obliged to draw attention to the blatant instances of distortion by certain European countries of the history of the Second World War, to the trampling upon the memory of millions of Soviet soldiers and to these countries' treacherous consigning to oblivion of their own heroes.

After the collapse of the USSR, many memorials ended up on the territory of States bordering Russia. The course taken in a number of these countries to revive Nazism and rewrite history has struck a blow to the memorial heritage of the Second World War.

What do we see today? Vandalism under the banner of so-called decommunization, the destruction of monuments to our shared history and culture, the desecration of the graves of Soviet soldiers, torchlit marches by neo-Nazis, and the glorification of the Nazis and Hitler's accomplices. Many of these manifestations, and frequently all of them at once, have become the norm today in Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and likewise in Poland, Czechia and a number of other Western countries.

Against this backdrop, monuments to Nazi criminals are being erected, their protection is enshrined by law, and the actions by activists against these memorials to Nazis are rigorously prosecuted.

The cynicism with which the authorities of a number of supposedly "enlightened" European countries continue their zealous fight against their own historical past is striking.

There is no defence for the situation in Latvia, which aggressively promotes the cult of Nazis and their accomplices.

Latvia, along with Canada, Lithuania and Estonia, is a country where SS criminals continue to be openly honoured in defiance of the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal and contrary to numerous

international instruments, including the resolution adopted annually by the United Nations General Assembly on combating the glorification of Nazism.

Since 2022, the Latvian authorities have stepped up their efforts to destroy the Soviet memorial heritage and falsify history. The destruction of the Monument to the Liberators in Riga's Victory Park is notorious in this regard.

By proceeding with the "dismantling" of this monument, the Latvian Parliament violated Article 13 of the 1994 Russian-Latvian Intergovernmental Agreement, under which Latvia was obligated to protect Soviet memorials on its territory.

Numerous appeals by the Russian side for the monument to be transferred to Russia and its destruction prevented were rejected. Latvia has also blatantly disregarded the opinion of international human rights mechanisms and its obligations under international treaties.

Encouraged by this "success", the neo-Nazis continued their war against memorials, including the monument known as Alyosha in the city of Rēzekne, a monument in honour of Soviet soldiers and a stele on Glory Square in the city of Daugavpils, and many hundreds of others. Even monuments erected in honour of Latvian Red Army soldiers are being demolished.

Another similar trend has emerged in Latvia, namely the fight against Russian historical memory. This sorry list includes the demolition in Riga of the monument to the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin and the monument to Riga-born academician Mstislav Keldysh, one of the architects of the Soviet space programme.

The situation in Lithuania is no better. The authorities in Vilnius are following an agenda of falsifying history and glorifying Nazi collaborators by equating them with national heroes. At the centre of the authorities' policy is the desire to inculcate hatred towards Russians and everything associated with the USSR.

Soviet symbols are prohibited in Lithuania by law. In June 2024, the Seimas (Lithuanian Parliament) introduced an amendment that allows the remains of Soviet soldiers to be reburied in ordinary cemeteries away from cities and towns. Such vile plans were already drawn up in Šiauliai and Merkinė in 2025.

Since 2022, a wave of vandalism has swept across the country. More than 30 memorials and obelisks have been desecrated. The perpetrators have never received the punishment they deserved. Eighty-six cases of alterations to graves or memorial sites have been recorded. In 53 cases, the monuments were completely demolished.

The demolition of a monument at the military cemetery in Aukštieji Šančiai deserves special mention. It is in this cemetery that more than 5,000 soldiers and officers of the 5th Army of the 3rd Byelorussian Front, who died in July 1944 in the battles in this area, are buried. Among them are 12 Heroes of the Soviet Union.

Estonia has fully embraced neo-Nazism. How else can one interpret the honouring of former Nazi collaborators, a campaign launched to destroy the country's Soviet memorial heritage, the suppression of the activities of activists who advocate the preservation of the memory of the struggle against fascism, and the numerous efforts by the authorities in Tallinn to falsify history?

What could justify the fact that there are a number of monuments in honour of former members of the SS and the Forest Brothers on Estonian territory? To this day, public events are still being held in their memory, and the surviving accomplices of the Nazis are honoured with State awards.

The Estonian authorities used the Ukrainian crisis merely as a pretext for destroying the Soviet memorial heritage and erasing historical truth from memory.

In late January 2025, another act of vandalism by the Estonian State occurred. In the town of Valga, the stele on a fraternal grave was vandalistically destroyed and the slabs with the names of the Red Army soldiers buried there were removed. In April 2025, staff of the Estonian War Museum destroyed monuments in honour of brave fallen Baltic sailors, soldiers and officers in Tallinn's military cemetery.

The facts speak for themselves. At the same time, against the backdrop of plans announced by the authorities to demolish hundreds of "Red" monuments, the graves of and memorials to Estonians who fought on the side of the Third Reich remain untouched.

Of course, the absolutely unacceptable and deteriorating situation in Ukraine requires particular attention.

The Kyiv regime, which enjoys a feeling of impunity under the umbrella of its European sponsors, follows its ideological inspirations from the Third Reich in every respect.

In just six years (from 2015 to 2021), 52,000 toponyms were changed, 987 population centres were renamed and some 2,500 Soviet-era monuments were dismantled. And this happened even before the start of the special military operation.

The Kyiv regime's full-scale war on public symbols, monuments and names that are associated with the USSR and Russia continues to this day. An entire meeting of the Permanent Council would not be sufficient to shed light on even a fraction of what the Kyiv camarilla has done.

Let us cite just the latest examples.

In January 2025, Lviv City Council approved a decision to exhume the graves of Red Army soldiers who were killed in the Great Patriotic War and are buried on the Hill of Glory. We are talking about more than 200 individual graves, four mass graves and the burial sites of Heroes of the Soviet Union. The dismantling of the architectural structures of the memorial complex began in May of this year.

A month earlier, the Lviv authorities started destroying the fraternal grave of 1,804 Soviet soldiers who died liberating the city from the Nazis and were buried at the Field of Mars. This "exhumation" was carried out with the aid of mechanical diggers, with the bones of the soldiers collected in bags and sent to a warehouse. The neo-Nazis openly explain their desecration of Soviet soldiers' remains with political motives.

OSCE participating States can find more detailed information in the specialist report by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a number of European countries, entitled "Regarding the Situation with the Desecration and Destruction of Monuments Dedicated to Those Who Fought against Nazism in the Years of World War II", which will be distributed immediately after this Permanent Council meeting. A significant part of the report is devoted to exactly what is happening now in Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Moldovan authorities are not falling far behind Ukraine either in trying to “cancel” an entire chapter of their own country’s history and destroy its Soviet heritage, the culture of national minorities and even their own Moldovan identity, replacing it with a Romanian one.

The country has adopted a number of amendments to the Monuments Act, according to which the authorities may dismantle a monument on the pretext of it “violating public order and good morals”. The struggle to celebrate Victory Day on 9 May continues. And this is despite the fact that such a policy is not popular with the majority of the country’s inhabitants. And the current leader of Moldova Maia Sandu herself, while running for president, promised on camera not to prevent citizens from freely celebrating the public holiday of Victory over Nazism on 9 May, as long as they voted for her.

Cases of desecration of Soviet memorials have become more frequent. At the same time, no one is held accountable for such offences.

The Czech leadership is another “defender” of the Kyiv regime in this regard. Czechia’s once careful and respectful attitude towards monuments and the victims of Nazism has recently given way to ever more cases of attacks on Soviet memorial sites.

The removal of the monument to Ivan Konev, the symbol of victory and the liberation of Czechoslovakia and its capital city Prague from Hitler’s occupation, and of the feat accomplished by the Red Army, which, together with soldiers from General Ludvík Svoboda’s 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps, made a decisive contribution to the defeat of the Nazis, epitomized this shameful campaign.

The Russian side’s appeal to the Czech authorities to provide information as to the whereabouts of the statue of Marshal Ivan Konev that was removed from the monument still remains unanswered. In response, the Czech Foreign Ministry has merely cynically claimed that Russia has “neither legal nor moral rights to the statue”.

On 12 May of this year, another act of vandalism occurred in the city of Přerov against a memorial to Red Army soldiers. The perpetrators have not been found.

The campaign unleashed in Bulgaria against monuments to Soviet soldiers is alarming. The most blatant manifestation of this cynical policy was the dismantling of the Soviet Army monument in Sofia in December 2023. This happened in defiance of the rulings of Sofia City Court.

Other blasphemous actions include the desecration of the Alyosha monument in Plovdiv, the graves of soldiers in Dobrich, the memorial in Radomir and the Soviet soldier monument on the fraternal grave in a park in the city of Stara Zagora, the damage caused to ceramic portraits on the monument to naval officers in Pomorie and to the slab with the inscription “Eternal Memory” on the memorial to Soviet and Bulgarian submariners in the village of Kamchiya in the Varna region, the burning of wreaths on graves in Pernik, the damage to the plaque on the monument to Georgy Zhukov in Strelcha and many other shameful actions.

An unfavourable situation continues to be observed in Poland, where a “war” against monuments and memorials in honour of Red Army soldiers is in full swing, in violation of the country’s obligations under international law. Since 2022 alone, some 80 acts of vandalism have been recorded.

Just think about it. This is happening despite the fact that some 600,000 soldiers and officers of the Red Army died saving the Polish people from physical extermination by the Nazis.

Following the start of the special military operation, Poland ceased informing the Russian side of the discovery and subsequent reburial of the remains of Soviet soldiers. Corresponding appeals to the competent Polish authorities remain unanswered.

Alarming trends are evident in Germany, which has seen a sharp upsurge in cases of desecration and vandalism of Soviet war graves and memorials. We would remind you that, on 6 May of this year, unknown persons cut the ribbons off the wreaths that Russian and Belarusian diplomats had laid next to the former concentration camp in Dachau. There are also questions with regard to Finland, where cases of vandalism have also been recorded recently.

We call upon the aforementioned countries to immediately put an end to their shameful “war on monuments”, which has already caused enormous damage to the preservation of historical memory and the reputation of these “civilized” States.

We expect a public response from the OSCE’s relevant bodies to every egregious case of the destruction and desecration of monuments, graves and memorials.

Thank you for your attention.