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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1295th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

10 December 2020

**On the address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
Marija Pejčinović Burić**

Madam Secretary General,

We are pleased to welcome you once again to the OSCE Permanent Council.

The Russian Federation has consistently maintained that the Council of Europe should strengthen its position as a genuine pan-European organization. The principles of international law, the sovereign equality of States and respect for their positions and specificities must remain the cornerstone of the Council's work. Only such an approach will make it possible to promote unity and create a common legal and humanitarian space from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

This, Ms. Burić, was the subject of your recent visit to Moscow and your meeting with the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Mr. Sergey Lavrov. In the case of the OSCE, this is in line with the principle of equal and indivisible security. The two organizations are called upon to make a significant contribution to building mutually respectful dialogue, rapprochement and co-operation between States in the interests of peace and stability on the European continent. We hope that the German Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which commenced recently, will contribute to this.

The year 2020 has been a turning point for all of us. The pandemic has brought to the fore the need to respect the social and economic rights of citizens and has highlighted the lack of alternatives to multilateral co-operation in a wide range of areas, including health, education and science. Co-operation on vaccination should be a priority and considered in the context of ensuring the right to life.

More focused work is needed, backed by the international legal instruments developed within the Council of Europe – the Medicrime Convention, the European Social Charter and the European Pharmacopoeia. The report you prepared in September on State support measures in the face of the health crisis caused by COVID-19 provides useful insights in that regard. New technologies can also play an important role in stabilizing the situation during the “corona crisis”. We note the importance of co-operation within the Council of Europe in the field of artificial intelligence and in the search for answers to the complex ethical questions arising in that connection.

We are convinced that the work to address the sanitary and epidemiological situation should not overshadow our efforts in the OSCE and the Council of Europe to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, aggressive nationalism, neo-Nazism, religious intolerance and discrimination against Christians and Muslims. In that regard, we should like to emphasize the relevance of the priority areas of co-operation between the two organizations, above all in combating terrorism. For our part, we have consistently condemned terrorism in all its manifestations.

The clampdown on the freedom of the media and on the linguistic, educational and religious rights of national communities is particularly unacceptable against the backdrop of the pandemic. The Council of Europe should monitor more closely and respond immediately to the oppression of the Russian language in the Baltic States, where the shameful status of “non-citizens” continues to exist, and also to infringements of the rights of the Russian-speaking population and national minorities in Ukraine. We hope that the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights will also carry out the appropriate work on this matter. It is important to keep a close eye on the implementation of the recommendations to address the discriminatory nature of the acts already adopted and bring them into line with the OSCE commitments of participating States. This applies to Ukraine in no small measure.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of victory in the Second World War, in which the anti-Hitler coalition, with the decisive role of the Soviet Union, liberated Europe from Nazism. Today, collective efforts are needed in the fight against the glorification of Nazi criminals and their accomplices. Attempts to falsify the history of this most terrible world war are unacceptable. The desecration and destruction of monuments to those who fell in the fight against Nazism and the persecution of anti-fascist veterans are deplorable. We are convinced that the Great Victory and the monuments to its heroes must become part of humanity’s world heritage.

Madam Secretary General,

In conclusion, allow me to thank you for your personal contribution towards “rallying the ranks” of the Council of Europe and to assure you that steps to promote the unifying agenda invariably enjoy the support of the Russian Federation.

Thank you for your attention.