

PC.DEL/447/10
27 May 2010

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 May 2010

Regarding the recognition of a Nazi symbol as Lithuania's historic legacy

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to bring up the fact that the court of the city of Klaipeda dismissed the case against a group of young persons who demonstrated on 16 February this year, Lithuania's Independence Day, with posters showing swastikas, justifying its verdict by saying that this sign is a symbol of Lithuania's historic heritage.

Administrative proceedings were brought by the Lithuanian authorities under the amendments to the Administrative Code prohibiting the display of Nazi or Communist symbols at meetings or other public events in Lithuania.

This frankly odious decision by the court in Klaipeda has given rise to an absurd situation whereby Second World War veterans could be subject to prosecution and moral harassment for wearing their military decorations while local young fascist members of nationalist groups are at liberty to openly display Nazi symbols.

All this is provoking a growing wave of justified indignation and protests, not only in Lithuania. For example, Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Israel, called this decision by the court an insult to the victims of the Holocaust and an encouragement of fascist activity in the country. In his opinion, it signals to the people who suffered at the hands of the Nazis in Lithuania that they are not welcome in that country, since the law there defends criminals and not their victims. He called on the court to change its decision.

Against this background, it is striking that there have been no comments on the situation by the authorities in Vilnius, and the European Union has also been silent.

We invite the European Union to comment on the scandalous decision by the Lithuanian judiciary. Once again we believe that it would be useful to emphasize the inadmissibility of the attempts to play down Nazism that are made possible with the evident connivance of the Lithuanian authorities.

Thank you for your attention.