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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1214th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 January 2019

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Mr. Chairperson,

On 27 January we marked the 75th anniversary of the complete lifting of the inhumane and criminal siege of Leningrad. The memory of the heroism of the inhabitants of Leningrad and the soldiers of the Red Army will always be with us.

A year after the rescue of Leningrad, in January 1945 Soviet troops liberated the Auschwitz-Birkenau (Oświęcim) Nazi concentration camp complex, a veritable “death factory”, in which as many as four million people were exterminated, including around one million Jews. By way of a United Nations decision in 2005, this day of liberation – 27 January – was designated the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

Altogether, more than six million Jews died in the Holocaust. For the peoples of Russia and for the other peoples in the multi-ethnic Soviet Union who sacrificed more than 26 million lives on the Altar of Victory in the Second World War, preserving the historical memory of those terrible events remains a task of national importance. The distinguished Ambassador Sandro De Bernadin also spoke in his statement today about the need to counter the distortion of the historical narrative. At the same time, it is surprising that in this message, in contrast, for example, to the recent statement by Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, there is no mention whatsoever of the perpetrator of the Holocaust, namely the Nazi regime – as if it were not the Nazis who exterminated the Jews. How can the Alliance attempt to preserve the memory of this massive crime without naming the perpetrators?

In the days of mourning for the victims of the Holocaust in Russia, a Week of Remembrance was organized by the Russian Jewish Congress to mark the 74th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp. In October last year, the Second Moscow International Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism, Racism and Xenophobia, with the title “Protecting the Future”, was organized by the World Jewish Congress, Euro-Asian

Jewish Congress and Russian Jewish Congress in collaboration with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As part of the Restoring Dignity programme, in 2018 new memorials and commemorative plaques were put up in 17 locations connected with the tragedy of the Holocaust, including two memorial plaques in Ryazan, where Alexei Weizen, who participated in the uprising in Sobibór concentration camp, lived and worked. In total, 65 monuments have been erected in 15 regions of Russia.

Meanwhile, honouring the executioners of the Jewish people – veterans of Waffen-SS units and collaborators of various kinds – has become commonplace in other parts of Europe. Those who collaborated with the Nazis and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity are being declared national heroes and participants in national liberation movements. In a number of countries, the “war” on monuments in honour of those who liberated Europe and the whole world from fascism continues. These irresponsible acts encourage the revival of a murderous ideology. Through this condoning of the glorification of Nazism, a generation is being formed in Europe that is ignorant of the truth about the most terrible war in the history of humanity.

The esteemed Mr. De Bernadin stated that Jewish communities are subject to persecution in a number of European countries. This is also confirmed by the results of a recent sociological survey on the problem of anti-Semitism by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. The problem was considered to be very great in Belgium, France Germany and Poland.

Speaking in the European Parliament on 23 January, ahead of Holocaust Remembrance Day, on the rise of extremism in EU countries, Moshe Kantor, President of the European Jewish Congress, said that the deeds of the Red Army should not be forgotten.

The situation in Ukraine, where the authorities condone radical right-wing groups and sentiments, is particularly worrying. The authorities in Kyiv honour supporters of the Nazis from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, who took part in the massive and brutal murder of Jews and people of other nationalities, including in the notorious Volhynia massacre. Holocaust perpetrators Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych, who were involved in murders of this nature, have now become national heroes. Aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism are rampant in Ukraine, as noted in the reports of many international non-governmental organizations.

Latvia hosts annual marches of the veterans of the Latvian Legion of the Waffen-SS. In Estonia, monuments are erected to members of the SS, and gatherings of SS veterans and their followers are organized every year. In Lithuania, Nazi accomplices are venerated. Monuments to Red Army soldiers who gave their lives to put an end to the Holocaust are destroyed and desecrated in Poland.

The European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2018 also mentions the growth of neo-Nazism and neo-fascism. It states that “the lack of serious action against neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups has enabled the occurrence of the current xenophobic surge in Europe.” It is worth noting that participants in European Parliament events on the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day reaffirmed that many victims could have been avoided if at the start of the Second World War leaders of the European nations and the United States of America had not

opted for a tactic of non-interference in relation to the Nazi regime. The US Government and the EU authorities in Brussels are taking the same approach to neo-Nazism today.

On the initiative of Russia and a number of other States, including OSCE participating States, the United Nations General Assembly adopts a resolution every year against the glorification of Nazism. The number of co-sponsors continues to grow. Only two countries – the United States of America and Ukraine – vote year after year for spurious reasons against condemning those who annihilated the Jewish people and other nations.

We must not only honour the memory of the innocent victims and heroes but also do our utmost to ensure that such tragedies do not occur again.

We should like to take the opportunity of welcoming the decision by the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship to continue the practice of past years by devoting its first event in the human dimension to combating anti-Semitism.

Thank you for your attention.