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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
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AT THE 1195th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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On the 1938 Munich Pact and the rise of neo-Nazism in the OSCE area

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE area is witnessing a growing trend of glorifying Nazis and their accomplices and increasingly frequent attempts by some participating States to falsify history and rewrite the results of the Second World War.

It is in this context that we should recall that in a few days' time, on 30 September, we will mark the 80th anniversary of one of the twentieth century's tragic moments – the Munich Pact of 1938. On that day, the main European powers – Britain and France – acting in the illusory hope of deflecting the threat of Nazi aggression from their own countries, concluded with Nazi Germany an agreement that became the prelude to the Second World War. Given the names of the agreement's signatories, it would be more fitting to call it the Pact between Chamberlain and Daladier and Hitler and Mussolini. The Munich Pact resulted in the voluntary handover to Germany of then Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland region.

Poland also got involved. Not only did Poland not oppose the shameful Munich deal; it reaped the fruits by taking part of Czechoslovakia's territory. What is more, Poland was one of the first countries to conclude a non-aggression pact with the Nazis, back in 1934.

What is indisputable is that the Western European powers were doing all they could to push the Nazi regime into confrontation with the Soviet Union while themselves remaining outside the conflict. It was this egotistical approach that convinced Hitler of his impunity and cleared the way for an offensive to invade "the East".

This short-sighted policy resulted in years of bloody war, tens of millions of dead, injured and missing, the Holocaust, Nazi concentration camps, hunger, devastation and other human suffering. It took tremendous effort and the creation of an anti-Hitler coalition to liberate Europe to overcome the consequences and return to peaceful life.

The Munich Pact is a classic example of the disastrous consequences that a belief in one's own exceptionalism and the pursuit of narrow national interests can have. Let me share

an eloquent quote from a statement by the Soviet People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of 17 March 1938, which was sent to Britain, France, the United States of America and Czechoslovakia. It read: "Tomorrow it might be already too late, but today the time has not yet come for all countries, especially the great powers, to take a firm and unambiguous position on collectively saving the world."

Today, Nazi ideology is again on the rise in a number of OSCE participating States. In Estonia, glorifying former members of the Waffen SS has already become something of a national cult. Just recently, there was a show of "solidarity" with former SS members in the small town of Lihula. Their admirers gathered there on 2 September with the intention of rebuilding a monument to the accomplices of the criminal Nazi regime that had been dismantled in 2004. In Riga, Waffen SS veterans and their young radical supporters march every year. What is more, officials also take part in these gatherings. In Lithuania, similar processions take place in Vilnius and Kaunas. The participants carry flags with swastikas and shout the slogan "Lithuania for Lithuanians."

In Ukraine, Nazi groups such as Right Sector are incorporated into the security bodies. Neo-Nazi groups are active in Ukraine, the use of Nazi symbols is increasing, there are torchlight processions, and monuments to Soviet soldiers are desecrated. There has been a rapid rise in influence of far-right groups such as C14, Bratstvo, Right Sector, White Hammer, National Corps, Svoboda and others.

In the United States, more than 900 different hate groups preach intolerance on the basis of religion, race or gender. They include around 130 groups of Ku Klux Klan followers, 99 neo-Nazi organizations, more than 100 white nationalist groups, 78 skinhead groups and more.

In this respect we are genuinely surprised by the lack of an appropriate response from representatives of the so-called "Western democracies" to the numerous cases of glorifying Nazis and their acolytes. History has, unfortunately, already given us cruel lessons of the destructive nature of such policies.

We repeat again that honouring Nazis insults the memory of their victims and contravenes international obligations. Such actions also violate the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly condemning glorification of Nazism. It is noteworthy that Ukraine and the United States are the only countries that vote against this resolution every year.

We expect to see the relevant OSCE institutions, including the Chairmanship, the Secretary General, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the High Commissioner on National Minorities step up their efforts to conduct an objective assessment of these developments in the OSCE area and come up with effective measures to prevent them.

As the President of Russia Vladimir Putin said, "the lessons of Munich are relevant today. They convincingly demonstrate that global security cannot be ensured with the help of behind-the-scenes intrigues and plots, and geopolitical ambitions, hypocrisy and double standards inevitably have disastrous consequences and fuel tension in international relations."

Thank you for your attention.