



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA TO THE UN,
OSCE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

**Statement by Ambassador Gints Apals, Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Latvia, delivered in response to the statements by the
Delegations of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus**

Permanent Council No.924,
Vienna, 20th September, 2012

Mr Chairman,

Exercising my right of response to the statements made by the Delegations of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, I would like to remind that my government condemns the crimes and ideology of all totalitarian regimes in strongest possible terms. This applies to both Nazi and Communist systems. Latvia rejects and deplors any glorification of war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by these regimes.

I would like to use this opportunity to provide more detailed information on one event specifically referred to by the Russian Ambassador. Indeed, on 14 September 2012 in Latvian town Bauska a group of private individuals erected a monument to those who defended the town against Soviet forces in summer 1944. The mayor of Bauska made absolutely clear that the monument honoured 300 civilian members of local community who took up arms, formed a self-defence unit and protected the town from July to September 1944. These people did not belong to any branch of German armed forces. The monument has nothing to do with Nazi ideology or war crimes. The inscription on the monument reads „To the defenders of Bauska against repeated Soviet occupation. Latvia must be Latvian”.

It is surprising that the Ambassador of Russia attributes this monument to the crimes of Nazi death squads that operated in the territory of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. It is even more surprising that he builds a link between neo-Nazism and words „Latvia must be Latvian” that belong to the pre-war President of my country Kārlis Ulmanis who perished in captivity soon after Soviet occupation of 1940.

From this I can draw only one conclusion: the Delegation of Russia is selective about historical facts and economical with the truth when it comes to debate concerning the situation in my country.

Thank you very much for your attention.