

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1152nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 July 2017

On the falsification of the history of the Second World War in Latvia

Mr. Chairperson,

On 20 June 2017, the Saeima (Latvian Parliament) considered a new version of the law on the status of participants in the Second World War drafted by the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Public Affairs.

According to this document, veterans of that war are understood to be persons who were citizens of Latvia on 17 June 1940 and took part from 1 September 1939 to 2 September 1945 in the “fighting against the German or Soviet armed formations”.

This approach is supposedly designed to “promote social cohesion” and “reconcile” veterans who fought on both sides. The idea is not new: in 2012 the former President of Latvia, Andris Bērziņš, actively promoted it.

Now this blasphemous idea of putting Nazi accomplices on the same footing as combatants who opposed Nazism is once again up for discussion in an even more distorted version. Whereas the status of veterans was formerly defined on the basis of documentary evidence of their participation in the Second World War, now under the revised law, of all the persons who fought with the anti-Hitler coalition only those who belonged to the 130th Latvian Artillery Corps (mostly ethnic Latvians) are counted.

In this way, non-Latvian Red Army veterans who fought the Nazi invaders in other units will be regarded *de facto* as “Soviet occupiers”. By these sophisticated methods, the authorities are attempting not only to rehabilitate Nazis but also to categorize those who fought on the side of the anti-Hitler coalition on ethnic grounds. In fact, this approach echoes the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Latvia on the Definition of the Status of Politically Repressed Persons of 12 April 1995, which defines “victims of the communist regime” solely as citizens of Latvia and persons who entered the country legally before 17 June 1940 and lived there permanently from that time.

Moreover, in accordance with the draft law, it is self-governing authorities that have the right to grant veterans services at beneficial rates, which is yet another form of pressure on the Russian-speaking leadership of a number of Latvian towns.

This initiative, which follows the traditional line by the authorities in Riga of glorifying former members of the Waffen SS, is effectively a denial of the decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal. It also conflicts with the provisions of the annual resolution by the United Nations General Assembly “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”.

Thank you for your attention.