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Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia
to the OSCE

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Statement by Ambassador Mariin Ratnik, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the OSCE in response to the Statement delivered by the Russian Federation.

Permanent Council No 924

20 September, 2012

Thank you, Mr Chairman,

I'd like to use the opportunity to reply to these aspects of my distinguished Russian colleague's statement which referred to my country.

The publication of that unfortunate advertisement and a cartoon to mock it were undoubtedly intended as jokes. However, as the Estonian Foreign Minister has said last week immediately after the incident, "a joke that hurts very many people cannot be a joke even by intention; every one of us knows that very many people were slaughtered in an extremely gruesome way in concentration camps, so to turn the issue into some kind of joke or advertisement was absolutely unacceptable and out of place,". I cannot but wholeheartedly agree with that statement. Estonia has repeatedly condemned Holocaust as well as the crimes against humanity perpetrated by totalitarian regimes, most recently by our Prime Minister as well as the Minister of Defence on the Holocaust Remembrance Day this year, and is working together with international community to raise awareness of these crimes.

The Estonian Defence Minister's statement made at the meeting in Saaremaa, Kuressaare, was to pay tribute to those who have fought for restoring independence of the Republic of Estonia and has nothing in common with recognizing Nazism. The same goes also for other actions mentioned by my Russian colleague today. As explained on this forum many times before, Estonian people, like other Eastern European peoples, endured during World War II the occupation under the criminal regimes of both the Soviet Union and national socialist Germany and fought against both of these forces; both of these regimes also conscripted Estonians in violation of the international law. The battles on the Estonian soil caused tremendous destruction in the region, and it is regrettable that there are those who wish to use tragic events that took place more than sixty years ago for their dubious ideological purposes.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.