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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1371st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 April 2022

**On ongoing gross violations of the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking
population in some OSCE participating States**

Mr. Chairperson,

We regret to say that the discussion about the upsurge of Russophobia, which we started here more than a month ago, is becoming a permanent fixture on our body's agenda. This shameful phenomenon has become an integral part of the new reality in a number of OSCE participating States. When we tried, with facts in hand, to prove that the violation of the rights of Russians and Russian-speaking citizens in Western States was in violation of fundamental human rights documents and a whole set of OSCE commitments in the human dimension, the discussion in response had little to do with the substance of the issue. Some have gone so far as to say that Russians are themselves Russophobes, because they persecute their citizens, who for some reason are called "human rights defenders" in the West but are considered criminals in the Russian courts. Some just grinned sardonically, saying "serves you right". Since we have not had a serious discussion, we are forced to continue raising the issue.

Mr. Chairperson,

In today's Western society, everything connected with Russia is being unreflectingly eradicated with inexplicable enthusiasm, and the rights and freedoms of the Russian and Russian-speaking population, including children, are being roughly trampled on. The international human rights structures of the United Nations and the OSCE are not responding as they should to these blatant examples of discrimination and racism, where people are persecuted simply because of their origins, language or culture. The attitude that guides the ordinary people and the political and public institutions in a number of Western countries is evidently quite primitive – "Russian means enemy". This is despite the fact that, for example, there are 4.5 million native Russian speakers in the Federal Republic of Germany, 122,000 in France, 209,000 in Lithuania and 30,000 in Poland.

The scale of Russophobia and the degree of satisfaction with its consequences shows that these sentiments have long existed in societies. Moreover, politicians in a number of OSCE participating States have not only not opposed them but have even encouraged them. The fact that "latent" Russophobia exists

and is cultivated by Western countries is also pointed out by the US writer and journalist Robert Bridge in an article dated 6 April in *The Citizen* newspaper.

The Russophobic fervour of high-ranking Polish officials – we have quoted them repeatedly here – has been eagerly picked up by another Eastern European State, the Czech Republic. The country’s functionaries saw university entrants from Russia as a major threat to their national security, requiring the intervention of the intelligence services. On 17 April, in an interview on iDNES.cz, the Czech Minister of Education Petr Gazdík said literally the following: “Czech education is now tackling not only the influx of Ukrainian children, but also another issue related to the country’s security. ... We provide training in information technology to students from Russia. But these ‘future hackers’ will return home to help President Putin.”

Unfortunately, as the Human Dimension Committee on 26 April showed, OSCE representatives are determined to ignore the increasing harassment of minors since the start of Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine and other deep-rooted grave violations of children’s rights. For example, the Latvian authorities decided to quietly reopen the debate on the total Latvianization of the education system. The Government in Riga is also continuing its crackdown on Russian-language media. The news portal www.smi2.ru and online media such as vedomosti.ru, 1tv.com, Interfax-russia.ru and many others were recently blocked in that country. Moreover, with the active connivance of Western countries, OSCE functionaries mandated to monitor blatant violations of media freedom of this kind have sought to produce questionable “reports” and to discuss baseless allegations and accusations instead of doing the work they are supposed to do. Once again, we call for this approach to be abandoned and for the unprecedented persecution of Russian-language media to finally be properly evaluated.

Mr. Chairperson,

The spreading Russophobia manifests itself in many unpleasant forms and affects practically all spheres of life, including historical memory. Monuments are being barbarically dismantled “on camera”, war graves are being desecrated, and symbols associated with the Great Patriotic War are being banned. A dire example of this is Poland, where of the 561 memorial sites, only about 100 have survived to this day. A similar picture can be seen in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where cases of desecration and vandalism of Soviet war memorials continue.

On 19 April an act of vandalism was reported involving offensive daubings on an Orthodox church in the Austrian town of Laa an der Thaya, next to which is a Soviet war grave.

In addition, we are outraged at the “strong recommendation” sent to Russian officials by the chairperson of the Austrian and the president of the international Mauthausen committees to refrain from participating in the next traditional commemoration of the anniversary of the liberation of this concentration camp, where thousands of Soviet prisoners of war were brutally tortured. The Russian Federation, as the successor State of the former USSR, does not accept discriminatory treatment of the victims and prisoners of Nazism on the basis of nationality in the spirit of the misanthropic ideology of fascism.

The Austrian Government has gone even further. Under new amendments to the law, quoting and reposting from the Russian media outlets RT and Sputnik in Austria will carry a fine of 50,000 euros. We remind you that these media are already on the European Union sanctions list and are not broadcasting here.

We urge the OSCE executive structures to give a principled assessment of the “blossoming” of Russophobia and participating States to stop neglecting their commitments and genuinely oppose

discrimination against the Russian and Russian-speaking population. For our part, we shall continue to draw attention to this serious problem.

Thank you for your attention.