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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1372nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

5 May 2022

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

Mr. Chairperson,

We are compelled to continue discussing the rampant Russophobia in certain OSCE participating States. One cannot help but be struck by the zeal with which some of our colleagues are trying to deny the widespread evidence of violations of the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population and to justify their denial of the existence of Russian culture. As we have already said, various methods are being used for this purpose – from ignoring obvious problems to attempting to place responsibility for what is happening on Russia itself. Apparently, those who are used to thinking of themselves as “paragons of democracy and human rights” simply do not want to acknowledge the existence of inherent racism and other forms of discrimination in their societies.

We have already drawn attention to the widespread manifestations of Russophobia in Germany, to which the officials of that State were compelled to respond. In particular, in an interview with the *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung* newspaper, Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance Luise Amtsberg stated directly that hostile attitudes towards Russians are wrong. She also spoke out against the boycott of Russian art and culture.

However, far from all politicians have taken such a rational approach. Recently, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau joined the list of high-ranking Polish and Czech officials who have made Russophobic statements, having spoken of the “consequences” of the situation around Ukraine for Russians in international sports. This comment is a perfect example of ethnic discrimination and racism from the leader of this country himself, a country that on other occasions praises so-called inclusiveness and democratic values. Along the same lines is a tweet by former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, in which he proudly shares actual Nazi propaganda that offensively portrays Russian soldiers as inhuman beings. Incidentally, we would remind you that we are talking about a country that is a member of the Troika and directly supports the work of the Polish OSCE Chairmanship. It is not difficult to imagine what kind of “support” the Swedish Government will provide to the Polish authorities on this topic.

What is more, Poland, which is proud of its role as a “trendsetter” in Russophobia (we have already said that Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki called this shameful phenomenon “mainstream”), in its anti-Russian rage has banned the Russian-language sections of some websites, such as the Russian-language version of the website culture.pl. The management of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute justified this step by saying that it was “dictated by the decency of a civilized person in the face of Russian barbarism”. This raises the question, unfortunately rhetorical, of how the news about the cultural life of Poland itself, published in Russian, relates to some sort of “Russian barbarism”. For that matter, can the actions of those who discriminate against languages be called “decent” or “civilized”?

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation in the OSCE area continues to deteriorate. The International Tchaikovsky Competition was excluded from the World Federation of International Music Competitions under spurious pretexts. The organizers of a music festival in the Swiss city of St. Gallen refused to stage the opera “The Maid of Orleans” because its composer, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, was Russian. Russian performers have been suspended from participating in the Eurovision Song Contest, and Russians have been deprived of the opportunity to vote for their favourite participant. Also included is the demolition of monuments to Russian writers, a ban on the performance of classics of Russian music, and even attempts to equate Russian national musical instruments with Nazi symbols. It is clear that the “cancellation of culture” has a direct impact on the situation of the Russian and Russian-speaking population.

Against this backdrop, the statement made at the previous meeting by the Permanent Representative of the European Union that “there is no threat to Russian culture in Europe” is perplexing. We urge the European Union “bloc” to finally face up to the truth and begin to combat the flagrant cases of harassment of the Russian and Russian-speaking population.

In Latvia, the linguistic inquisition is continuing on the quiet. The authorities of this State, who have been honing discriminatory practices against the Russian-speaking population for decades, have finally decided to complete the total “Latvianization” of the education system. The innovations entail the transition to the State language for teaching in kindergartens and some school classes as early as 2023. It is planned to completely eliminate the Russian language by 2025. After that, Russian language and literature will be available only as interest-based programmes. Teachers without proper knowledge of the State language will be immediately suspended from their jobs.

These discriminatory steps by the Latvian Government run counter to OSCE commitments to protect ethnic groups and contradict the recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities on the right to education in one’s native language.

Germany has gone so far as to use blatant anti-Russian political propaganda in its children’s magazines. In particular, this applies to the children’s publication *Weser-Kurier*, the March issue of which looked more like a political editorial in the *Bild* newspaper than an educational publication for children. The headlines “Russia versus Ukraine”, portraits of Presidents Putin and Zelenskyy and corresponding texts in place of crosswords and pictures for preschool children – ladies and gentlemen, what further examples of rampant Russophobia do you need?

We believe that the continuing wave of Russophobia, which manifests itself in various ugly forms, notably in statements by the top officials of some OSCE participating States, requires a principled assessment by the leadership of our Organization. We call on the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the High Commissioner on National Minorities to carefully examine our

statements and finally respond in accordance with their mandates. We will continue to draw attention to this serious problem.

Thank you for your attention.