

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT TO REPLY, AT THE 1095th MEETING  
OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 April 2016

**On plans to demolish monuments in Poland**

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, I should like to reply to the distinguished representative of Poland. In recent years, we have often observed attempts by a number of States to rewrite history, especially that of the Second World War, portraying liberators as occupiers. I should like to remind our Polish colleagues that their State owes its very existence to the over 600,000 Soviet soldiers and officers who laid down their lives to liberate Poland.

This was recognized in particular by Winston Churchill who cannot very well be suspected of harbouring Soviet sympathies. He said: “Without the Russian Army, Poland would have been destroyed or brought into slavery and the Polish nation itself would have been wiped off the face of the Earth.”

I should like to briefly address the claims that the bilateral agreements between the Russian Federation and Poland do not apply to monuments. Yet again I call on our distinguished colleagues to read documents carefully before referring to them.

Allow me to cite the Treaty on Good-Neighbourliness, Friendly Relations and Cooperation. Article 13.3 states: “The parties shall work together to identify, preserve the integrity of and ensure a place in the culture for assets, monuments and sites located on their territory and associated with the historical and cultural heritage of the other party’s peoples, ensuring their proper legal, physical and other protection”. Article 17.1 states: “Graveyards, burial sites, monuments and other memorial sites to honour and remember the citizens of one of the parties, both military and civilian [...] shall be preserved and maintained and protected by law”.

I shall now cite the Agreement on Burial Sites and Memorials to Victims of War and Repression. Article 3 states: “The parties shall maintain memorials and burial sites, ensuring the preservation of burial sites, graves, monuments and other memorial structures [...] The parties are obliged to inform one another without delay of any incidents of vandalism to memorial and burial sites and to take immediate measures to bring them into good condition,

to penalize the perpetrators in accordance with their State's law and to prevent such acts in the future".

Therefore those agreements unequivocally provide that Poland has a responsibility to preserve not only graves, but also monuments.