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*Eesti Vabariigi Alaline Esindus OSCE juures
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia
to the OSCE*

Statement by Ambassador Triin Parts, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the OSCE in response to the statement delivered by the Russian Federation.

Permanent Council No 732

11 September , 2008

Mr Chairman,

I listened with interest the statement of our Russian colleague. This kind of statement is already third one within last two months where Russian Federation tries to portrait Estonia as a country where pro-fascist ideas are supported by the authorities.

I can assure you that this kind of allegations are totally groundless.

On two previous occasions, when Russian Federation raised this issue, Estonia answered to Russian allegations and we also distributed a fact-sheet where some aspects of our history were explained. Therefore, this time I would be brief and refer to our previous statements to the same allegations. Nevertheless I would like to stress some aspects of our previous statements.

It is to be emphasized that Estonia is a country, where principles of rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, including freedom of association and freedom of expression.

The gatherings of the WWII veterans in Estonia are convened for remembrance of war victims (not of any ideology) and they have private character.

The authorities have no legal grounds nor need to prohibit these gatherings of war veterans regardless of the sides they fought 60 years ago, as long as they respect principles of national and international law.

I would also like to clarify some facts of the event, referred to by the Russian Ambassador.

In the meeting participants made speeches, in which they commemorated deceased comrades and spoke about tragic history. Some current political topics, namely the conflict in Georgia, where also touched upon and deceased in this conflict were also commemorated.

In this meeting chaplain held a prayer, wreaths were laid to the war memorial and two members of the parliament delivered also speeches about historical events.

Thank You, Mr Chairman