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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1135th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 March 2017

On International Zero Discrimination Day

Mr. Chairperson,

International Zero Discrimination Day on 1 March has become an annual reminder of the importance of ensuring the rights and freedoms of every member of society, without distinctions based on race, gender, language or religion. This approach is enshrined in many OSCE commitments, starting with the Helsinki Final Act, and is affirmed by universal instruments, including the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The principle of the equal treatment of all categories of human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – remains imperative. Their universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness as outlined in the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action remain to this day. Meanwhile, unfortunately, their selective interpretation in favour of short-term interests has become a common aspect of the political culture of a number of States. It was not so long ago that we witnessed the discrimination already in sport, including in Paralympic sports. Pseudo human rights rhetoric is used to justify interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States, the application of unilateral coercive measures and often the use of force, leading to human suffering.

Under the slogan of a “new interpretation” of the concept of human rights, neo-liberal views are being imposed that provoke conflicts and division in society. The universal values that underlie all world religions and civilizations are coming under attack.

At the same time, the most important problems are being ignored – the rise in neo-Nazism, the situation of “non-citizens” in a number of OSCE participating States, the oppression of national minorities. We cannot hide behind concern for the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, playing into the hands of radicals who preach the ideology of hatred and advocate the glorification of the Nazis and their accomplices.

The rise in intolerance and discrimination on religious grounds, including the persecution of Christians, is of deep concern. In this connection, we should like to recall the

Declaration on Enhancing Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism, adopted more than two years ago at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Basel, which contains a clear commitment to the elaboration of similar instruments to combat intolerance against Christians and Muslims. We call on colleagues who regularly speak here about the importance of human rights, to fulfil their Basel Ministerial Council commitment this year.

Thank you for your attention.