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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1234th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 July 2019

On the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Belorussia

Madam Chairperson,
Our distinguished Belarusian friends,

The Third of July is a special date for the Republic of Belarus. On that date yesterday, the main public holiday – Independence Day – coincided with a major landmark in the commemoration of the Great Patriotic War. Seventy-five years ago, Soviet troops liberated Minsk, thereby putting an end to the fascist occupation of Belorussia, which had lasted for 1,100 days and claimed the lives of one in three of the republic's inhabitants. It was to be an important milestone on the path to our joint victory. This anniversary was also celebrated in Russia yesterday, with a festive artillery salute ringing out on Poklonnaya Hill in Moscow to pay tribute to the courage and brotherly spirit of those who marched together to liberate the Belorussian capital.

The President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, noted in a congratulatory telegram to the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, how Russians and Belarusians piously revered the memory of the courage and heroism of those who took up arms to defend the fatherland in that war. "Significantly, the ties of brotherly friendship and solidarity bequeathed to us by our fathers and grandfathers to this day continue to be a pledge of the durability of Russian-Belorussian relations," the President of Russia emphasized.

A joint statement was issued in connection with the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Belorussia by the ministers for foreign affairs of the Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), in which they pointed out how important it was to keep alive forever the memory of victory over the "Brown Plague", and to reject and categorically condemn any attempts at reassessing the events of the Second World War and at reinterpreting its outcomes.

In May next year, we shall be celebrating the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War – a commemoration that will, undoubtedly, take place at a level corresponding to the scale of this heroic deed and the spiritual greatness of those who accomplished it.

Dear Belarusian friends,

We once again offer the brotherly Belarusian people our sincerest wishes for peace, well-being and prosperity.

Thank you for your attention.