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STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 7 May 2020

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Like others, we see the importance and relevance of marking the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. We appreciate the Chair's initiative in reminding us all of the extreme acts that can result from nurturing, rather than opposing, the hate against those who are "different". The Holocaust and the killing of Jews, Roma, Sinti, homosexuals, and others during the deadliest war must never be forgotten. We therefore thank Ambassador Michaela Küchler for her important and thoughtful statement and we will continue to support the highly relevant work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

The war that started in 1939 for most of Europe, in 1940 for Norway and a year after that for the Soviet Union and the USA, was the last major war in the OSCE area. Still, since then armed conflict and casualties of war and conflict have continued on our continent. Though May 1945 brought peace and freedom to some of us, for others, one occupying force ended up exchanged for another.

In the Permanent Council we are time and time again reminded of the importance not to rewrite history. On this we can agree. In 1939, there were some states that declared war on the German aggressor – and some who used the opportunity to conduct an attack on Poland on their own. After the war was over, there were some countries that could return to the path of independence and democracy, while others had to wait. Some had to wait until the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

For Norway's part, we remember, and are still grateful for, the help we received from our Allies including our neighbour in the north, the Soviet Union. We also remember, and appreciate, that our northern neighbour decided to withdraw its forces and let us rebuild our country according to our own will once peace was won.

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