

High-level “Arria formula” meeting of the UN Security Council, 8 May 2020

**75 Years from the End of the Second World War on European Soil –
Lessons Learned for Preventing Future Atrocities, Responsibility of the Security Council**

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Jean Asselborn, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of
Luxembourg**

Mr. President, dear Urmas,
Excellencies,

Last year, we commemorated the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Luxembourg and the battle of the Bulge, the last major German offensive on the western front. We had the occasion to honour American veterans, our living memory, and to express our gratitude to all those who fought to liberate Europe from the Nazi tyranny. We witnessed how present these historical moments were in the mind of our people.

The end of the war in Europe, six months after the battle of the Bulge, was a turning point in European and world history.

Freedom was restored, alas not in all of Europe.

The magnitude and horror of the genocide were revealed, leading to the establishment of international criminal justice.

In San Francisco, our Charter was signed and provided a linchpin of an international rules based order for the decades to come. It provided also legitimacy to the decolonisation process.

May I add that the end the war opened also the way to this particular peace project, which is the European Union.

So, why is it so important that we commemorate this 75th anniversary?

At a time of rising nationalism, populism and xenophobia, it is a stark reminder of where, pushed to the extreme, these ideologies can lead. For history not to repeat itself, you better get the facts right, and that means also not instrumentalizing history for current geopolitical purposes.

At a moment of immense peril, in the last years of World War II, a group of people showed the way of international cooperation, human rights, economic development and peace and security for all.

For all its flaws, for all its setbacks, our organisation, the United Nations, has delivered. Let us not forget this at a moment when multilateralism is under siege.

We have our principles, the Charter. We have a roadmap, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Alas, we have also our common challenges, notably the emergencies of COVID-19 and of climate change. What we need most now is political will.

I hope that under Estonia's able Presidency, the Security Council will finally respond to the appeal of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire in the dramatic time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We owe this to all those who fought for our freedom 75 years ago.