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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1291st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

26 November 2020

**In response to the address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,  
Mr. George Tsereteli**

Mr. Tsereteli,

We have listened attentively to your address and would like to make some comments on the main aspects of the work of the Parliamentary Assembly.

In the context of the ongoing pandemic, it is of particular importance to emphasize the Assembly's relevance as a platform for a mutually respectful and constructive dialogue on the most pressing security and co-operation issues in the area of responsibility of our Organization. This task requires the abandonment of deliberately confrontational approaches and of the airing of unfounded allegations and the introduction of biased resolutions against individual countries.

In connection with the assessments of regional conflicts, we should like to remind you that without exception all the topics raised by you require an individual and measured approach.

Regarding the situation in Ukraine, it is high time that the Parliamentary Assembly used its potential to assist in a settlement by adopting an impartial position based on an objective assessment of what is happening in the eastern regions of the country. Why don't the representatives of the Assembly finally establish contact with civil society in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and their real representatives? This would not only help to strengthen the Parliamentary Assembly's credibility, but would also undoubtedly be a beneficial addition to the numerous efforts undertaken within our Organization to help resolve the crisis in Ukraine.

There is a need for a proper assessment of the situation in the Republic of Belarus. Unfortunately, a whole series of steps taken on behalf of the OSCE in recent months with regard to Belarus have seriously "tarnished" the Organization's reputation. We have all witnessed attempts to use the OSCE to exert pressure on the authorities of the Republic and to grossly interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign country. In fact, the OSCE's efforts should be aimed at helping to settle differences calmly through the broadest possible internal Belarusian dialogue, without meddling or external pressure.

The potential for a positive contribution by the Assembly to strengthening security and stability in the Trans-Caucasus is limited only by the continuing sluggishness in recognizing the reality of the situation in the region resulting from the aggression of the Saakashvili regime in August 2008. We remain hopeful that lawmakers will be able to support the efforts under the aegis of the OSCE to facilitate direct dialogue between representatives of Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia on issues common to the three States.

It is our view that the initiative for identifying possible options for the use of parliamentary diplomacy to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh problem should come from the parties to the conflict themselves. We firmly believe that an extremely sensitive approach is needed to support implementation of the statement made by the President of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Russia on 9 November, which has put a stop to the bloodshed and created a basis for a comprehensive political settlement in the region.

Mr. Tsereteli,

We are confident that the Assembly has good potential for devising a unifying agenda and for parliamentarians to discuss topical issues affecting the interests of all countries in the OSCE area. This applies in particular to countering terrorism. It is important not to reduce the focus on this topic and to continue exchanging experiences and best practices within the Parliamentary Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism.

We see strengthening mutual understanding between peoples and improving human contacts, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, as one of the main functions of the Parliamentary Assembly. This would go a long way towards promoting the recovery of the tourism industry, including its cultural component, which is one of the sectors most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. One important task that remains is the development of economic connectivity and the alignment of integration processes in the OSCE area with the prospect of the creation of a Greater Eurasian Partnership.

We call on the Assembly to pay more attention to combating Christianophobia and Islamophobia and also to the preservation of traditional and family values. It is important to respond in a timely manner to violations of linguistic, educational and religious rights. By the same token, there has also been a growth in manifestations of racism, chauvinism, neo-Nazism and other extreme forms of intolerance in several participating States. Combating illegal migration and trafficking in human beings is a further issue that needs to be kept in focus.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of victory in the Second World War, during which the anti-Hitler coalition, with a decisive role being played by the Soviet Union, liberated Europe from Nazism. Today there is a need for concerted efforts, also by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, to combat the glorification of Nazi criminals and their accomplices. Vandalism of monuments to Red Army soldiers and commanders, who gave their lives to fight this evil, is inadmissible. Nor can we accept attempts to falsify the history of this most terrible world war.

We continue to support the work of parliamentarians in observing elections, which is particularly important against the backdrop of the pandemic. We are counting on the Parliamentary Assembly to go about observing the parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan and the early presidential election in Kyrgyzstan without bias. In that connection, the Assembly should consider co-ordinating its efforts with the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In conclusion, I should like to wish you, distinguished Mr. Tsereteli, and the members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its Secretariat robust health and success.

Thank you for your attention.