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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1120th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 November 2016

**In response to the reports by the Chairpersons of the
Security Committee, the Economic and Environmental Committee and the
Human Dimension Committee**

Mr. Chairperson,

We were pleased to listen to our distinguished colleagues Ambassadors Cristian Istrate, Vuk Žugić and Katja Pehrman, who head the special committees created as subsidiary bodies of the OSCE Permanent Council. We regard their work as an important element in the process of finding and achieving consensus on many questions in the three security dimensions.

We support the work of the Chairperson of the Security Committee, Ambassador Cristian Istrate, in combating transnational threats – terrorism, violent extremism and illicit drug trafficking – and welcome his active co-operation with the Transnational Threats Department within the OSCE Secretariat.

We believe there is a need for discussion on countering foreign terrorist fighters, illegal migration and the financing of terrorism. We hope that the work on combating terrorism, in particular on the exchange of information on airline passengers, will result in the adoption of practical, effective and mutually beneficial decisions at the Ministerial Council meeting in Hamburg. Terrorism is an evil that can be effectively countered only through concerted efforts and on the basis of the norms of international law.

Illicit trafficking in drugs, including those from Afghanistan, demands the greatest attention. Statistics illustrate that this threat is acquiring disastrous proportions in the OSCE area.

We note the work being carried out to reach agreement on a second set of confidence-building measures in the area of information and communication technologies and the efforts to put them into practice. At the same time, it must be mentioned that many of them remain solely on paper. Confidence in cyberspace must first be painstakingly restored,

and only then should we go on to expanding activities in this area with the avoidance of politicization.

We urge that the Committee should not be turned into a classroom but that it should be a platform for the exchange of opinions by experts on topical problems connected with new threats and challenges, including those emanating from the territory of Afghanistan and the southern Mediterranean.

We note the skilful leadership of the Economic and Environmental Committee by Ambassador Žugić. We hope that his experience will make it possible to arrive at a consensus on a Ministerial Council decision on good governance and connectivity.

We generally approve of the work of the second committee. The practice of holding themed meetings has proved its worth. It has been possible to discuss a whole range of topical problems, including those regarding improving the business climate, renewable energy sources, water management and reducing the risks of natural and man-made disasters. Statements in the Committee by members of field missions have been of interest. It would be useful to continue to invite representatives of specialist international organizations to the meetings so as to achieve greater co-ordination in their joint efforts.

At the same time, there is a need to consider more carefully the questions raised for discussion in the Committee. The inclusion on the agenda of problems relating to the conflict cycle or human rights is counter-productive and leads to politicization of the discussion and duplication of the work of other committees.

We thank the distinguished Ms. Pehrman for her efforts to encourage constructive dialogue in the Human Dimension Committee.

We welcome the inclusion on the agenda of problems relating to economic, social and cultural rights. We have stated on several occasions that this set of questions has long been ignored without reason in the OSCE.

There was a useful exchange of opinions at the meeting devoted to safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities, where Mr. Valery Rukhledev, president of the All-Russian Society of the Deaf, was one of the speakers. We note the discussion on the rights of the child in the context of preventing trafficking in human beings along migration routes. We believe, however, that a topic as pressing as the protection of children should be dealt with separately, particularly given the fact that, for example, freedom of expression and freedom of the media have been discussed twice by the Committee, in February and October.

We welcome the rational change in the Committee's work programme in the run-up to the Ministerial Council meeting and its concentration now on elaborating draft decisions. This timetable ensures that expert energies are not diverted to secondary tasks.

We are still against the imposition of the practice of "voluntary reports" by participating States. Other formats are available for this – the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and the three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings, events held by the Chairmanship, not to mention the Universal Periodic Review within the United Nations.

We should like to emphasize once again that the OSCE is an inter-State organization and there is therefore a need to give careful consideration to the participation by representatives of civil society in its meetings. And lastly, attempts to politicize the work of the Committee must be nipped in the bud.

We hope that these constructive comments will be taken into account in the organization of the work of the three Committees.

Thank you for your attention.