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PC.DEL/525/21

16 April 2021

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1309th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

15 April 2021

**On the 60th anniversary of the first human space flight**

Madam Chairperson, the Kyrgyz Republic wishes to associate itself with this statement.

We are at present commemorating a memorable date. Sixty years ago, radio stations around the world interrupted their broadcasts to announce the sensational news that man had conquered space. On 12 April 1961, our compatriot Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin orbited the Earth in the Vostok spacecraft, launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. This event in many ways determined the course of our history going forward. The immortal feat of this Soviet “messenger of peace” became humankind’s common heritage, heralding the start of spectacular inter-State projects for the exploration of outer space. The archival photos now being shown to you are a reminder of how it all happened.

Gagarin’s flight, which lasted 108 minutes, marked the beginning of the era of crewed space flight. As you know, on 7 April 2011, the United Nations General Assembly declared 12 April the International Day of Human Space Flight. This date is now observed each year in recognition of how the space age is a major milestone in the civilizational development of humanity.

That encounter with outer space broadened the horizons of our knowledge and sense of self and erased the boundaries limiting our conception of the world. Humankind suddenly felt itself to be part of something incomprehensibly vast. We all began to think in new, grander terms. We stopped being afraid to set ambitious and seemingly unattainable goals.

The most important thing that the events of 60 years ago brought us was the awareness of our common destiny and collective responsibility for everything we do on our planet. It is no exaggeration to say that the discovery of outer space has spurred us on to work together towards lofty goals.

We firmly believe that this breakthrough in space exploration gave additional impetus to the difficult years-long negotiations and to the conclusion of important agreements for our Organization. Without faith in great unifying ideas, there would have been no Helsinki Final Act, no Charter of Paris for a New Europe, nor many other documents that “glue” the OSCE together. It is sad to see that, over time, this truth has ceased to be self-evident.

Some of you may be wondering why I am bringing up something that happened such a long time ago and that supposedly is not directly related to the OSCE's activities. The answer is simple. Let us not forget what the peaceful conquest of space has taught us: wisdom, harmony, internal equilibrium and harmonious co-existence with what at first glance looks unfamiliar or alien. Failure to conform to someone else's stereotypes should not lead to a ramping up of confrontation. Here is a good lesson from history. The space race evolved over time into international co-operation in this field, a joint constructive endeavour for the benefit of all humankind. It is a clear illustration of how a unifying agenda should be our common absolute priority.

Thank you for your attention.