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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1343rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 November 2021

**In response to the report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental
Activities**

Ambassador Hasani,

We are grateful for your detailed presentation on your Office's activities during the reporting period. Since this is your first appearance at the Permanent Council in your new capacity, allow me to congratulate you once again on your appointment to the post of Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

We agree with your assessment that economic co-operation in Europe is not going through the best of times. The region is not free from manifestations of economic protectionism, unfair competition or the nefarious practice of applying unilateral sanctions. We believe that it is high time for a frank conversation on the prospects for a renaissance of the spirit of co-operation and commitment to the principles enshrined in the outcome document of the 1990 Bonn Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe.

That important conference was the first and to date only meeting at the level of the participating States' ministers of the economy. The anniversary event organized on 5 July of this year by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) together with the Swedish OSCE Chairmanship and the Permanent Mission of Germany was a step in the right direction but it cannot substitute for a genuinely open conversation involving the heads of the economics ministries. We are willing to support in every possible way efforts to further pursue this topic.

We are on the whole satisfied with the work of the OCEEA, which has maintained its efficiency despite the harsh restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic. We note the Office's contribution to the successful holding of the 29th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, which was devoted to women's economic empowerment. Russian experts actively took part in the events organized under the Forum, presenting the experience gained in creating equal opportunities for women and men in economic activities. We are counting on the OCEEA's expert support during the drafting of a relevant decision for the Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm.

We support the efforts to raise the profile of the second "basket" and to achieve a balance between the three dimensions of the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security. This purpose is served by the

creation of digital training platforms to simplify interactions with the participating States, which in turn helps to unlock the unifying potential of the economic and environmental dimension.

We commend the OCEEA's practical work on good governance and combating corruption, the strengthening of connectivity through the promotion of cross-border trade and transport corridors, human capital development, disaster risk reduction, improving energy efficiency and environmental protection. That being said, it is important to remember that the activities of the Economic and Environmental Co-ordinator should be informed by the participating States' needs and carried out in strict accordance with the mandate.

Today, the tasks of post-COVID-19 economic recovery and rebuilding of the sectors most affected by the pandemic, including the tourism industry, have come to the forefront. We welcome the intention of the future Polish OSCE Chairmanship to focus the events under the Economic and Environmental Forum in 2022, the year of its 30th anniversary, on these topics. The OCEEA's support and expertise will be very much in demand in this work.

The strengthening of co-operation with relevant international organizations on various aspects of economic and environmental activities, above all with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, continues to be a relevant issue. The main task in this regard is to avoid duplication with other multilateral bodies.

In closing, we should like to wish you, distinguished Ambassador Hasani, and your Office's professional team every success in your future work and the best of health. We look forward to fruitful collaboration. As always, you can count on Russia's support.

Thank you for your attention.