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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1100th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 May 2016

In response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan

Mr. Chairperson,

We attach particular significance to the activities of the OSCE field presence headed by Ambassador Markus Müller in Tajikistan, a country with which we have cordial relations.

We note the co-operation that has been established between representatives of the field presence, the OSCE Secretariat and the Government of Tajikistan within the framework of the so-called task force. We support close co-ordination of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan's project activities with the Tajikistan authorities. Only that kind of approach, whereby resources are concentrated on key areas of work, can ensure that the OSCE field presence makes the maximal contribution to building the national capacity of the host State.

We appreciate the Office's activities in helping to secure the Tajik-Afghan border and in building the capacity of the Tajikistan border service officials. We share the concern regarding the growing threats stemming from northern Afghanistan. We think that there is a need for more focused efforts by the field presence with regard to countering transnational challenges and threats – first and foremost, in combating terrorism, smuggling and illicit drug trafficking. Countering violent extremism and radicalism should also remain among the Office's priorities. We understand the difficulties in this sphere. In our view, the existing budgetary and extrabudgetary resources at the field presence's disposal allow more attention to be paid to this issue. We welcome the Office's contribution to the demining efforts and support the intention to continue this important humanitarian work.

At the same time, we should like to emphasize that we still see no reasons for the transfer of an extrabudgetary project, the OSCE Border Management Staff College, to the Organization's Unified Budget. In our view, the OSCE's financial resources are not unlimited, and placing an additional burden on the Mission's budget is inadmissible. As it is, the material capacities have grown systematically over the past few years. There is no justification for this practice of transferring non-consensus projects to being financed by all OSCE participating States.

The global economic and financial crisis has not spared Tajikistan either. We welcome the Office's noticeably stepped-up efforts to promote social and economic development in that country, to improve the investment climate there and to combat corruption, while ensuring environmental security.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia and Tajikistan are strategic partners and dependable allies of long standing. We have established strong and varied bilateral co-operation and effective collaboration within different international and regional frameworks. We intend to strengthen these ties with a view to providing further assistance to the Government of Tajikistan through the Collective Security Treaty Organization, as part of the efforts to ensure stability and security in Central Asia, which is directly affected by instability in Afghanistan. This is closely associated with the task of combating trafficking in drugs and in human beings, the illegal arms trade and other forms of organized crime emanating from Afghan territory. Our aim is for Tajikistan to be a stable and prosperous State. As regards the aforementioned migration policy, we should like to point out that this is a strictly bilateral issue, which we are resolving jointly with the authorities of our ally Tajikistan.

In conclusion, we should like to thank Mr. Markus Müller for his skilful work as Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. We think that the substantial growth of the field presence's capabilities over the past few years has been due largely to the personal efforts of its leader, who is well acquainted with the regional situation and has taken a balanced approach. Ambassador Müller, we wish you all the best.

Thank you for your attention.