

Delegation of the Russian Federation

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

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On the 2017 OSCE Programme Outline

Mr. Chairperson,

We have listened carefully to the statement outlining the programme activity tasks of our Organization for next year. We agree with your approach, Mr. Secretary General, that it is the participating States which determine the priorities of the work of the Secretariat, the specialized institutions and the field presences, and they should be guided by these priorities. In that connection, I should like to express a few thoughts on the matter being discussed today.

The examination of the Programme Outline should, first and foremost, be focused on assessing the implementation by all the OSCE structures of the decisions adopted by the decision-making bodies. We expect the need for each programme to be justified in concrete terms and the cost of its implementation indicated. We take the position that programme activities should be based on the corresponding Ministerial Council decisions. We therefore trust that the heads of the OSCE institutions and the Organization's missions will, first and foremost, provide reports on how they carry out the consensus-based instructions of the Ministerial Council meetings. We would also be interested to hear their reaction to the recommendations made by certain participating States to improve the programme activities and save resources.

This request applies to the heads of all of the OSCE's specialized institutions. Unfortunately, in the Programme Outline submitted for the future activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, we have seen no proposals for improving the operation of these structures or adapting them to the current situation. We trust that this omission will be rectified during the upcoming discussions on each of these institutions.

We are in agreement with the Secretary General that facilitating a resolution of the internal Ukrainian conflict is one of the key areas of the OSCE's work. The work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) is important in that regard. It is for that reason that Russia agreed last year to the proposal to allocate additional resources to the units

of the Secretariat, primarily the Conflict Prevention Centre, which directly support the SMM's work.

At the same time, it must be kept in mind that there has been a considerable increase in the SMM's budget – more than 10 million euros compared to last year. As a result, the overall expenditure of all participating States to safeguard the OSCE's activities and, accordingly, their contributions to the Organization's Unified Budget and the SMM's budget have grown significantly. The total value is around 220 million euros. We therefore need to carefully analyse the programme activities of all the institutions and field presences so as to avoid unjustified financial outlay and to allocate resources only to resolving pressing problems identified by all the participating States.

In the programme activities of the executive structures, priority attention should be paid to the most acute challenges to stability and security in the OSCE area. We are talking about common threats such as terrorism, extremism and illicit drug trafficking. We firmly believe that not only the Secretariat and its specialist units, but also the field presences – in the Balkans and in Central Asia – should deal with these cross-border problems.

It is important to remember that increasing the unifying potential of co-operation in the social and economic sphere remains a strategic goal shared by all. Activities to assist States in forming a single economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok as an economic basis for the future security community in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region should be reflected in the Programme Outline. This task was set by the leaders of our countries at the OSCE Summit in Astana in 2010.

As for the work of the missions, an analysis of their Programme Outline shows an extreme bias in favour of promoting various projects on democratization, the protection of human rights, gender equality, etc. Without downplaying the importance of such projects, we should like to remind you that the main task of the field presences is to help the host countries to strengthen their national institutions. It should be borne in mind that, in accordance with paragraph 41 of the Charter for European Security of 1999, provision is made for the transfer of the missions' tasks to the State institutions of the host countries and the subsequent closure of the missions. However, no strategy or time-frame for the completion of such activity is given in any of the programmatic sections concerning the plans for the work of specific field presences. This is an obvious omission in our view, which needs to be rectified in the subsequent OSCE Programme Outline.

There are serious criticisms regarding the plans for the work of the OSCE's specialized institutions. Once again there is evident bias towards promoting the same programmes. A number of participating States have serious criticisms about the justification and implementation of these projects. At the same time, other pressing problems connected, for example, with the causes and consequences of the migration crisis in Europe, the countering of aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism, the protection of children's rights, privacy and a whole range of socio-economic rights have been forgotten. Programmes to combat anti-Christian sentiment, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are needed just as much. Greater attention needs to be paid to preserving cultural, religious, family and moral values.

All of this confirms once again that a substantive review of the humanitarian institutions' programme activities is a matter of urgency. These institutions should promote a

consolidated agenda based on the decisions adopted by the collective bodies and not on the priorities of certain groups of countries.

We expect these comments to be taken into account during the discussions that will start next week on the consideration of the Programme Outline for the OSCE executive structures.

Thank you for your attention.