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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1118th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 November 2016

**In response to the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group,
the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the
Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference and the Head of the
High-Level Planning Group**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, the distinguished Ambassadors Igor Popov, James Warlick and Pierre Andrieu, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the distinguished Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, and the Head of the High-Level Planning Group, Colonel Hans Lampalzer, for their detailed information about the progress of the negotiating process and their assessment of the current situation in the region.

We highly appreciate the efforts of the troika of Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, endorsed by the United Nations Security Council as a collective mediator in the elaboration by the parties of a viable settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. The tragic events in early April this year were the latest evidence of the explosiveness of the situation in the region and at the same time of the importance of this mediating format. We call on the parties in future to strictly observe the 1994 ceasefire agreement and the subsequent 1995 agreement on strengthening the ceasefire regime in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which have no time-limit and form the basis for the cessation of hostilities in the region.

In that connection, we cannot but be concerned at reports about new violations of the ceasefire regime, including the use of large-calibre weapons and with victims on both sides of the line of contact. We urge the parties to exercise restraint and seek a compromise at the negotiating table. The maintenance of peace and stability in the region is of fundamental importance for keeping up the dynamics in the negotiating process on basic conflict settlement elements. We trust that the planned meeting at the end of the year of the Co-Chairmen with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan will help to establish a firm basis for continuing the fruitful mediation efforts.

We believe that the practical implementation of the agreements on the reduction of military risks concluded in the talks by the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Vienna on 16 May and in St. Petersburg on 20 June would also help to achieve this goal. We await signs of a constructive approach to the enlargement of the office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the basis of an arrangement that would permit a qualitative improvement in the potential for monitoring the situation at the line of contact and the Armenia-Azerbaijan border. We look forward to the rapid conclusion of work on elaborating a joint mechanism for investigating armed incidents in the conflict zone. We support the assistance provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross in the exchange of information about missing persons and appreciate the contribution of the High-Level Planning Group to the updating of peacekeeping plans in the region.

In collaboration with the other members of the troika of Co-Chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group and within the framework of the agreed regime, the Russian Federation is willing to continue to provide the parties with all the necessary assistance in devising a mutually acceptable consensual basis for dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh problem.

In conclusion, we should like to express our sincere gratitude to the distinguished French Ambassador Pierre Andrieu, who is coming to the end of his term as Co-Chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group, for his substantive contribution to the joint mediating mission in such a complex area and to wish him every success in his new function. We look forward to the same productive co-operation with your successor, the distinguished Ambassador Stéphane Visconti.

Thank you for your attention.