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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1128th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 January 2017

Regarding the damage to a historical monument in Abkhazia

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to comment on the statements by the distinguished representatives of Georgia, the United States of America, Malta and Canada on the supposed damage to a historical monument in the Abkhazian village of Tsebelda. In reality, the attempts to fill the statements with hackneyed anti-Russian rhetoric make them lose all meaning. For example, it is not clear who is meant in the eyes of our colleagues by “Russian occupation forces”.

If they are talking about the 7th military base of the armed forces of the Russian Federation stationed on the territory of the Republic of Abkhazia in accordance with bilateral agreements with this sovereign State, the Press Service of the Southern Military District already commented clearly and unambiguously on this matter, as is known, on 10 January. I quote: “No construction or other work has been carried out or is planned in the village of Tsebelda in the Republic of Abkhazia by the 7th military base of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.”

As for the closure of crossing points at the Georgian-Abkhazian border, this matter is being dealt with in the framework of the Geneva International Discussions. We suggest that Georgia address its claims to the independent Abkhazian authorities.

Thank you for your attention.