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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1078th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 November 2015

**In response to the report by the High Commissioner on National
Minorities, Ms. Astrid Thors**

Mr. Chairperson,
Madam High Commissioner,

We take note of your report on your activities since July this year and your statement today.

We have been unfortunately obliged recently to fundamentally reconsider our attitude to the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM).

Russia has consistently spoken against the artificial politicization of issues discussed in the OSCE and against attaching labels to individual countries and for engaging in substantive and constructive discussion of the problems that unfortunately still exist in large numbers in the OSCE area. Experience has shown that among our colleagues there are quite a few who are interested not in real dialogue but in a display of propaganda and self-promotion. It is absolutely unacceptable that the OSCE executive structures should have been taking part in this process. They are called upon to foster constructive dialogue, but instead they actively play along with these destructive tendencies.

A very clear confirmation of the politically motivated position of the HCNM was the presentation in September this year together with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of an extremely one-sided and biased report on Crimea. Its elaboration "at a distance" without a corresponding instruction from the OSCE participating States was a direct violation by these executive structures of their mandates and of the norms and principles by which the Organization works. The fact that it was undertaken with extrabudgetary resources does not give either the HCNM or the ODIHR any right to act of its own accord or on the direct instruction of sponsors.

We have already stated our position on this subject to both the ODIHR Director Mr. Michael Link and the Commissioner Ms. Astrid Thors. We reiterate it today to the High Commissioner. The activities of these two institutions appear more like the pursuit of a

political agenda than so-called independent investigation – not to mention the fact that the use in the report of non-consensus terms like “occupation” and “annexation” with reference to Crimea is inadmissible. From all this we conclude that the HCNM and the ODIHR, contrary to their declared neutrality and impartiality, have been firmly on the side of the group of known anti-Russian countries, something they have no right to do under any circumstances.

In view of this, we have felt obliged to seriously analyse the situation and to draw the corresponding conclusions.

In spite of our many remarks, the High Commissioner’s travel demonstrates the continued imbalance in the work of this executive structure and its constant focus on the countries of Central Asia, the Trans-Caucasus and south-eastern Europe. Once again, the situation in other regions of Europe, particularly in the light of the migration crisis, and also on the North American continent, is not taken into account. Other important questions not reflected in the HCNM reports include the continuation of the shameful situation of the statelessness of a large section of the population in a number of OSCE countries and the reduction there of the number of Russian-language schools and pre-school facilities. There is no mention of the flagrant cases of victimization of anti-fascist veterans, who also represent a minority, or the destruction of monuments and desecration of the graves commemorating their fight against Nazism. How is it possible to ignore the evident underlying nationalistic motive?

The designation today by the High Commissioner of priority issues for the future – access of national minorities to due process of law and to the mass media – is to be welcomed, all the more so given the fact that Russia has repeatedly raised questions about the pressure exerted on Russian-language media in a number of OSCE countries, going as far as the complete termination of their activities, the massive manifestations of aggressive nationalism, insults and pressure on Russian-speaking citizens and representatives of other minorities, the unprecedented growth of extremely dangerous nationalistic groups, the use of Nazi slogans, swastikas and insignia of killing squads, etc. The office of the High Commissioner should play a leading role in a timely reaction to such threats and challenges.

We hope that the OSCE institutions, including the HCNM, will be able to draw the necessary conclusions from the current difficult situation and to ensure that their activities are objective and depoliticized, as required by their mandates and the principles of our Organization.

Thank you for your attention.