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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1211th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 January 2019

**In response to the presentation of the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship's  
priorities by the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia,  
Mr. Miroslav Lajčák**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Minister,

We thank you for the detailed presentation of the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship's priorities for 2019. We share many of your approaches.

Slovakia's Chairmanship comes at a difficult period in the erosion of trust in the Euro-Atlantic region. Vitally important international legal mechanisms for strategic stability are being destroyed. Agreements on the indivisibility of security (including those at the highest level) have been consigned to oblivion. The North Atlantic Alliance continues to increase its military infrastructure and manoeuvres on its "eastern flank". The practice of unilateral sanctions is becoming entrenched. Human rights mechanisms are being abused. The wounds caused by protracted conflicts have not healed. What is more, the OSCE countries are a long way from solving the problems connected with transnational threats that affect them all, such as terrorism, illegal migration, drugs and crime.

We hope that the Slovak Chairmanship will make maximum use of the OSCE's resources to de-escalate the politico-military situation, rebuild trust and find answers to common challenges. Our Organization has the possibilities for doing this, and your rich international experience, Minister, is the key to a successful relaunching of strategic dialogue to bring States closer together. We note your priority of developing partnership with other organizations. We urge that use be made of the potential for co-operation with key structures in the Eurasian area, including the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

We expect the OSCE to continue contributing to the settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis. This is especially important in the context of the worsening political situation in Ukraine in the run-up to the presidential election. We urge the Chairmanship to

focus the work of the OSCE representatives to the Trilateral Contact Group on facilitating the full implementation by the parties to the conflict – the Ukrainian Government, Donetsk and Luhansk – of the Minsk Package of Measures. Urgent attention needs to be paid to achieving a sustainable ceasefire and the disengagement of forces in the pilot areas. A comprehensive settlement is impossible without the implementation of the political provisions of the Minsk agreements – an amnesty, special status for Donbas, constitutional reform and local elections. It is important that the Ukrainian Government sets out on paper the compromise agreement of the two Normandy format summits according to the Steinmeier formula. We expect the Slovak Chairmanship to ensure the impartial and effective work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

We are outraged by the statement and letter to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) by the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Pavlo Klimkin, about not allowing observers from Russia to monitor the presidential election in Ukraine, even as part of the ODIHR, which were posted on Facebook on 9 January. This is an unprecedented discriminatory ban and a flagrant violation of fundamental OSCE commitments, in particular paragraph 8 of the 1990 Copenhagen Document. We expect clarification on this matter from the Director of the ODIHR, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir. We ask the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to keep an eye on this situation.

Genuine stability in the OSCE area cannot be achieved without the settlement of other conflicts, including the Kosovo problem on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244, finding compromises on the Transdniestrian and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts, and building depoliticized dialogue between Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia within the framework of the Geneva International Discussions on Security in the Trans-Caucasus. We hope that the implementation of the OSCE Milan Ministerial Council declaration on the Mediterranean will lead to greater stability in that region and the countries of Europe.

Minister,

We will continue to participate in the Structured Dialogue on risks to security, which is in itself a confidence-building measure and could lead to a de-escalation of the politico-military situation in the Euro-Atlantic region. This is of course provided that the format is not politicized.

The potential for co-operation in the first basket, in particular in countering transnational threats, is far from exhausted. Furthermore, there is need for an additional impetus. Our common task remains the creation of a global anti-terrorist front. We need to consolidate efforts to combat terrorist ideology, its financing and the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters. We trust that the OSCE's counter-terrorism agenda will be packed with useful events, as is the tradition. We note the plans to hold a counter-terrorism conference in March in Bratislava. It is our opinion that it should be mainly focused on inter-State co-operation in combating terrorism.

We suggest that the Chairmanship give consideration to the problem of drug trafficking. According to the UN, drug production and trafficking have reached catastrophic proportions. The OSCE has the tools and capacity to help combat this threat.

It is also important to implement the confidence-building measures developed by the OSCE to reduce the risk of conflicts emerging in the area of information and communication technologies and prevent the militarization of the information space, meddling in the internal affairs of States and the violation of their digital sovereignty.

As for the intention to include in the OSCE's agenda the secondary topic of security sector management and reform, we take the position that work in this area is carried out in the UN on the basis of Security Council resolution 2151. It applies to countries that have been completely destroyed by conflicts and are in the process of post-conflict reconstruction. There are no such countries in the OSCE area.

We need to use the foundations laid at the Milan Ministerial Council meeting for the digital economy and human capital to strengthen the unifying potential of the economic and environmental dimension. The theme approved for the 27th Economic and Environmental Forum on the basis of the Slovak Chairmanship's proposal – "Promoting economic progress and security in the OSCE area through energy co-operation, new technologies, good governance and connectivity in the digital era" – should facilitate this. We hope that professional discussions will contribute to the alignment of integration processes in the OSCE area.

We need to make greater use of the expertise of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities in the areas of energy co-operation, strengthening connectivity and good governance, including in the environmental sphere, introducing state-of-the-art technologies into the economy, creating smart energy networks, and preventing disasters and dealing with their aftermath.

We expect the Slovak Chairmanship to work constructively in the OSCE human dimension, which has long been in need of reform. Thematic and geographical imbalances must be eliminated, and peer-to-peer dialogue and a unifying agenda promoted. The adoption of a number of decisions at the Ministerial Council meeting in Milan showed that this can be achieved with goodwill. The work of the OSCE institutions should be transparent and accountable to the States, and carried out in accordance with their mandates. We look forward to the timely agreement of a package of human dimension events for 2019, including decisions on their themes, dates and agenda.

We note the Slovak Government's intention to counter intolerance, racism, xenophobia and violent nationalism. In that context, we need to finally implement the 2014 Basel Ministerial Council mandate regarding the elaboration of declarations condemning discrimination against Christians and Muslims. It is important to combat the glorification of Nazism, the falsification of the history of the Second World War and attempts to revise the decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

The persecution of media outlets on the basis of the country they are from remains a serious problem. There are various methods – arrests, pressure, denial of entry into the country, deportations, refusing admittance to events, blacklists and whitelists. We need to ensure that the media and public have access to information.

We must not weaken the protection of national minorities, including their linguistic and educational rights. Other important topics include traditional values, children's rights, combating trafficking in human beings, eliminating statelessness, social and economic rights,

preserving historical memory and cultural heritage, and preventing interference in private and family life.

There has been no lessening of the need for continued reform of the OSCE, including the drafting of a charter, procedures for the functioning of its institutions and missions, and uniform rules for election observation.

Minister,

All these tasks require great efforts and a high level of diplomacy from the Chairmanship. If it is to be an “honest broker”, it needs to adhere strictly to the Chairmanship’s mandate approved at the Ministerial Council meeting in Porto in 2002. It is important to remember that the OSCE’s pan-European tasks should not be hostages to the narrow interests of individual economic or political groups, of which the Chairmanship country may be a member. Public statements and events held by the Chairmanship should focus solely on consensus-based approaches and should take into account the full range of views of the participating States.

In conclusion, we hope that Slovakia can work effectively at the helm of the OSCE in the interests of the co-operation and security of all countries. For our part, we are ready for open dialogue on a basis of equality on the entire spectrum of our Organization’s agenda.

Thank you for your attention.