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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1178th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 March 2018

**In response to the report by the Director of the Office for Democratic  
Institutions and Human Rights, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir**

Mr. Chairperson,

We often hear the assertion that the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is an independent and autonomous institution within the OSCE. We should like to recall that the only truly autonomous structure within the OSCE is the Parliamentary Assembly. There has been no collective recognition of the ODIHR's autonomy within the OSCE. On the contrary, the OSCE Ministerial Council decision of 2006 in Brussels requires "accountability" from the ODIHR. This confirms that the Office is an executive structure. If you assert the ODIHR's autonomy, show us the reference to the concrete official consensus document, adopted by our Organization, stating this autonomy.

The ODIHR does indeed demonstrate *de facto* "independence" in the way it organizes its work. For example, it fails to take into account new opportunities for enhancing monitoring mechanisms in line with advances in technology and the demands of our times. We have already spoken here and at other forums about the advantages of remote monitoring of electoral processes and the need to scale back the time-frame of the work of experts in the "core team". All of this would help to optimize the financial burden and would save the ODIHR budget money – a subject so beloved of some of our colleagues.

For a number of years now the Russian Federation has been proposing that all OSCE participating States collectively elaborate and adopt a methodology for the ODIHR's election observation work.

The very fact that differences exist between countries over the election monitoring methodology attests to the need to discuss this vital matter. In this context, seeing as the Director of the ODIHR Ms. Gísladóttir is present, and addressing the Italian OSCE Chairmanship, we take this opportunity to propose holding a discussion on the ODIHR's electoral monitoring methodology so that all 57 OSCE participating States can examine together what steps we could take on this track.

Thank you for your attention.