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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1237th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

25 July 2019

On the early parliamentary election in Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

Whilst far from being ideal, last Sunday's election to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine nevertheless clearly demonstrated the genuine hopes that Ukrainian citizens have of long overdue changes finally taking place in their country.

The best confirmation of this is to be found in the fact that, after the will of the people was able to express itself, it was not the nationalists who came out on top but the new pro-presidential party "Servant of the People". Moreover, a significant proportion of Ukrainians supported the "Opposition Platform – For Life", which has consistently called for an improvement of relations with Russia.

Still, although the authorities in Kyiv have announced that the election went ahead in an orderly and transparent manner, a multitude of grave problems have been revealed by the preliminary findings of the International Election Observation Mission made up of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament. The observers commented on plenty of issues, most of them of an extremely serious nature: how the "rules of the game" were effectively not the same for everyone, numerous instances of vote-buying, breaches of the "campaign silence", chaos and confusion in the work of the election commissions, and many more.

Russian observers were again not allowed to join the ODIHR contingent in the mission team and take part in the monitoring. Whatever the Ukrainian representatives may argue, this contravenes paragraph 8 of the CSCE Copenhagen Document (1990), as indicated in the mission's report. The politically motivated withdrawal of the invitations to observers from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe cast a further shadow on the election campaign. The condonation of this by a number of participating States is a highly alarming sign that the open flouting of OSCE election commitments is becoming *de facto* acceptable.

The decision taken by the Central Election Commission of Ukraine once again not to open polling stations at Ukrainian diplomatic missions in Russia, which is discriminatory towards the country's own citizens, remained in force. This deprived around 3 million Ukrainians of the opportunity to cast their votes.

The inhabitants of Donbas and displaced persons in the rest of Ukrainian territory were, very much against their will, cut off from the voting process.

The very dire situation regarding the safety of journalists both before the election and while it was taking place is extremely alarming. Television channels that presented alternative points of view were subjected to attacks by radicals of all shades – precisely by those very radicals who, it must be emphasized, at the end of the day failed to win the people’s trust. The incidents recorded by observers include clashes in front of the office of the TV channel NewsOne on 8 July and the shelling of the office of the TV channel “112” with a grenade launcher on 13 July. We hope that the new Ukrainian authorities will do their utmost to hold the culprits to account and that they will not allow such outrages to happen again.

At the same time, we also wish to address the ODIHR. In our view, the use of non-consensus assertions about the allegedly “illegal annexation and occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation” is absolutely unacceptable. May we remind you once again that the inclusion of such formulations in the report amounts to a most flagrant overstepping of the Office’s mandate. In accordance with paragraph 3(b) of Permanent Council Decision No. 485 from 2002, statements of OSCE institutions “should not be inconsistent with OSCE consensus positions”. We exhort the Office to abandon this partisan approach and to act strictly within its mandate and in conformity with the Organization’s rules of procedure.

On the whole, the elections that have taken place may be said to have simply confirmed the disposition of Ukrainian society, which has had enough of the previous authorities’ destructive policy, to move away from confrontation. We trust that the new Ukrainian Government will listen to its citizens and live up to their hopes through concrete action.

Thank you for your attention.