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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1110th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 July 2016

In response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome our colleague Mr. Argo Grigorevich Avakov, the distinguished Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, with his first report to a meeting of the Permanent Council. We thank him for his analysis of the development of events in Armenia and his informative report on the activities of the field presence.

We are gratified to note the continuing close co-operation and co-ordination of the multifaceted work of the Office with the host authorities at different levels and also with civil society. We are convinced that this approach will make it possible to achieve practical results in assisting the Government of Armenia in pursuing reforms and transformations in the country in line with the priorities approved by the nation as a whole.

We note the great contribution by the Office to police reform, information security, enhancing transparency and promoting democratic standards in the Ministry of Defence, safeguarding the physical security of depots containing small arms and light weapons and improving the capabilities of the national Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise.

We are convinced of the practical utility of the expert assistance to the host authorities in improving the attractiveness of the country to investors by simplifying norms governing business activities. We believe that the Office's method of working in this area might be interesting to other OSCE field presences. We support the Office's work in the socio-economic development of the Syunik region and also environmental protection projects.

We note the Office's varied co-operation programme with the host authorities in developing good governance, safeguarding human rights, promoting the rule of law and media pluralism, and also with regard to migration and combating trafficking in human beings. We are sure that the Office will continue to structure its work in these important areas in strict compliance with its approved mandate and in accordance with Armenia's requests and wishes.

Mr. Chairperson,

We share the concern at the hostage-taking on 17 July by an armed group in a building of the Armenian Police Patrol and Checkpoint Service and also at the information about the killing and injury of police officers during the hostage-taking. We note the balanced spot report by the Office, confirming the measured reaction by the leadership of the National Security Service, which continues to attempt to resolve this difficult situation by way of negotiation. We trust that it will manage to find the best way to deal with the problem and to restore law and security to the country in the shortest time possible.

Thank you for your attention.