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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1158th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 September 2017

On countering violent extremism and radicalization

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to thank the Chairperson-in-Office, Sebastian Kurz, the Secretary General of the OSCE, Thomas Greminger, and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism, Peter Neumann, for their attention to the most important issues of countering extremism and radicalization. We consider this topic as secondary to the more global and general tasks of the prevention of terrorism as a whole.

We note that in the current turbulent international circumstances, the OSCE has managed to maintain its potential as a forum for the discussion and possible agreement of intergovernmental decisions on a number of crucial issues, including countering terrorism and extremism. At the same time, we urge States to take guidance from the United Nations' co-ordinating role in counter-terrorism, where, incidentally, truly breakthrough documents for international co-operation in counter-terrorism have recently been adopted. First and foremost, United Nations Security Council resolution 2354, which has become perhaps the main development of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, approved the international framework for combating terrorist ideas and propaganda. We believe that it would be useful for the OSCE to become involved in the implementation of these crucial decisions, primarily in order to prevent radicalization. We consider it redundant to focus on the secondary themes.

We attentively studied the Secretary General's report on project activities to counter extremism. More and more field presences are carrying out programmes in this area. The project budget is increasing. Such a trend should be supported in every possible way, if this is in the interests of the host countries.

We are disappointed that the participating States did not have enough time to study Professor Neumann's research. Russia actively participated in providing information on our efforts in this area during the country visit. We note with regret that the report practically fails to take this into account and in many respects represents the position of only one group of countries.

This approach proves once again that the tasks of countering terrorism and extremism are the responsibility of States and their representatives, with experience, powers and information not available to non-State structures.

The document raises a number of questions. All inter-State co-operation in counter-terrorism was ignored altogether – the report does not say a word about the decisions and documents of the United Nations and its Security Council that directly relate to the tasks of combating terrorism and extremism. The relevant decisions of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Belgrade (2015) and Hamburg (2016) were also adopted according to this philosophy. In the report, the main driver of extremism is the “repression” of some regimes, and there is no mention whatsoever of an even more significant factor of radicalization – external interference in the affairs of sovereign States. All substantive and established counter-terrorism terminology is written off: there are allegedly disagreements between States over it. There is nothing of the sort – all tasks are optimally formulated in the documents of the United Nations and the OSCE. The real issue is the absence of political will on the part of a number of States. It is necessary to work on the formation of this terminology, including in the OSCE, and not to invent new terms – “extremism”, “violent extremism”, “violent radicalism”, which in a number of situations serve as a justification for terrorists.

A more detailed position and criticism will be presented at the Security Committee. But it is already clear that the report can hardly be the basis for any serious decisions at the level of the OSCE participating States.

Last but not least, Professor Neumann was in Russia, where meetings with many persons responsible for countering extremism were organized for him, including with high-level government officials and representatives of voluntary organizations. The outcome is that there is not a single mention of the Russian experience, which is comprehensive and unique. Including the main experience – the mutually respectful coexistence of the peoples of Russia for centuries in one State.

Meanwhile, in its work within the framework of international formats, Russia focuses only on those priorities that are based on international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, Security Council resolutions and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The approaches set out in those documents are being successfully implemented in the Russian Federation, which has the experience of deradicalizing a significant number of the population. Our principles are formulated very simply: the need for support in combating extremism and radicalization in the existing international legal counter-terrorism framework, and the central role of States and their competent bodies in the organization of counter-extremism and counter-terrorism activities at the national and international levels. An important role in the prevention of terrorism and extremism can and should be played by civil society institutions, including the business community, educational institutions, religious communities, non-governmental organizations and the media. Their efforts should be co-ordinated by the relevant State bodies, which bear the primary responsibility for ensuring security in the country, in society and in relation to individual citizens.

We hope that our joint fruitful work within the OSCE in the area of counter-terrorism will allow us to reach important decisions, which are in the interests of all countries, at the upcoming Ministerial Council meeting in Vienna. Russia, in turn, is ready for dialogue and effective interaction.

Thank you for your attention.