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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1182nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 April 2018

On the presidential election in Azerbaijan

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the successful holding of the early presidential election in Azerbaijan, our friendly neighbour, on 11 April.

We note that the convincing victory in the election clearly demonstrates President Ilham Aliyev's high political authority and the recognition of his efforts to resolve the socio-economic and foreign policy tasks facing Azerbaijan today.

Sergei Lebedev, the head of the Commonwealth of Independent States observer mission, said that the election campaign stood out for the quality of its preparation. Observers from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation noted the transparent and democratic nature of the election, in which eight candidates competed for the post of president. The representatives of the Russian Federation Central Election Commission observing the election said that the campaign was absolutely legitimate and complied with the Republic of Azerbaijan's laws.

We hope that the desire to continue strengthening the strategic partnership reiterated by our countries' leaders will help to further the mutually advantageous co-operation between Russia and Azerbaijan in different areas.

Thank you for your attention.