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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1071st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 October 2015

On the presidential elections in Belarus

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, we should like once again to congratulate our Belarusian colleagues on the successful holding of their presidential elections.

Russia's President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, welcomed the re-elected President, noting that Mr. Alexander Lukashenko's convincing victory bore witness to his great political authority and the confidence of the population in him. The Russian President confirmed his willingness to continue intensive dialogue between our countries and the development of Russian-Belarusian strategic partnership and co-operation within the integration structures in the Eurasian area.

The elections held in Belarus were assessed positively by independent international observers. A number of Russian representatives took part in the election observation as members of international missions of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The observers from the CIS mission, which consisted of 387 persons, who visited 3,195 polling stations, concluded that the presidential elections had taken place in full compliance with the Constitution and Electoral Code of the Republic of Belarus. They conformed to the principles of democratic elections and were transparent, open and competitive. Both the early voting and the vote on 11 October ran smoothly and at a markedly higher level than five years ago.

As to the conclusions by the so-called international observation mission, which included members of the ODIHR, we feel obliged to draw attention to the political agenda behind some of its findings. Take, for example, the attempts by the ODIHR to assume the mantle of public prosecutor, telling Belarus where it supposedly stands on its "path to democracy". No one has given the Office the right to make such politicized assessments.

This once again forces us to recall the need for the elaboration of uniform regulations and modalities agreed within the OSCE for the conduct of election monitoring.

Thank you for your attention.