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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1248th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 November 2019

On the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Belarus

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to congratulate our Belarusian friends on the successful holding of elections to the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus on 17 November.

We note the unprecedented attention of the international community to this event. More than 1,000 foreign and around 28,000 national observers monitored the elections. Russian representatives participated actively in monitoring, both bilaterally and as part of the missions of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). A delegation from the Central Election Commission of Russia also participated in the election observation at the invitation of Belarus. They all noted the traditionally high level of organization of this expression of the will of the people.

We share the generally positive conclusions of the observers from the CIS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The head of the CIS mission, Sergey Lebedev, stressed that the elections were held in accordance with the Constitution and the Electoral Code, and that they were in line with democratic principles and were transparent, open and free. No violations of the law calling into question the legitimacy of the elections were noted. The SCO monitoring mission and the observers from the Central Election Commission of Russia arrived at similar conclusions.

These conclusions contrasted with those of the international mission made up of the ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe. The pointed criticism of all aspects of the electoral system appeared to be politically motivated, and the document itself had a persistently mentoring tone.

The diametrically opposed assessments by the international experts “on different sides of Vienna” and the harsh conclusions of the Office confirm the repeatedly voiced doubts about the soundness of the ODIHR’s methodology. In that connection, we once again emphasize the need for the adoption by consensus of uniform rules for election monitoring. In addition, we would remind you that the CIS has

repeatedly suggested the development of a common approach to the assessment of elections to its Western colleagues.

Thank you for your attention.