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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1137th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 March 2017

**In response to the report by the
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Mr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, to this Permanent Council meeting. We thank him for his report on the work and plans of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for 2017, and for his considerations on the prioritization of the activities of the second “basket” of the OSCE.

We are satisfied that the Office’s work plan continues to focus on the issues of combating corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism, facilitating trade, harmonizing customs and border crossings procedures, improving transport, and good labour migration governance. It is gratifying that the report also does not ignore such topical problems as reducing the risk of natural and man-made disasters, protecting critical energy infrastructure and increasing the efficiency of energy resources and renewable energy sources.

We note the contribution of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities to the holding of the first preparatory meeting for the 25th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (23 and 24 January 2017), devoted to the economic aspects of the problems of greening the economy and strengthening business partnerships, as well as of a representative business forum (25 January 2017), organized by the Chairmanship in conjunction with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. We expect that the other activities of the economic cycle in Astana and Prague will be no less successful.

We take a positive view of plans for developing co-operation with relevant international organizations. We believe that the experience and achievements of the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Programme are in demand in the area of good labour migration governance.

We proceed from the fact that it is necessary to use to a greater extent the advantages of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the OSCE and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in 2004. We believe that the assistance of this specialized structure would be useful for the practical implementation of Decision No. 4/16 on strengthening good governance and promoting connectivity, adopted at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Hamburg. In our opinion, the expertise and recommendations of specialized international institutions would help to avoid possible duplication of work and identify those “bottlenecks” that do not allow full use of the possibilities of the second OSCE “basket”.

We have repeatedly spoken about the need to take full advantage of the unifying potential of the OSCE’s economic and environmental dimension. It is not the OSCE’s role to give specific advice on the development of trade and economic relations. There are other specialized structures for this. Rather, it is to provide expert support through the joint efforts of the participating States to form a single economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok as an economic foundation for the future security community. Assistance is needed in establishing co-operation between Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian integration associations, eliminating existing dividing lines. The OSCE is a convenient format for exchanging views on the possibilities of “hooking up” integration processes in the east and west of the continent, matching legislations, standards and procedures and economic and financial policies.

The Organization already has a certain capacity. Thus, in the work of the first preparatory meeting for the Economic and Environmental Forum, Tatiana Valovaya, the Minister for Integration and Macroeconomics of the Eurasian Economic Commission, took part as a keynote speaker. A representative scientific conference on the topic “A look at the common economic space from Vancouver to Vladivostok” is planned for May 2017. We are counting on the continuation of this practice.

In conclusion, we should like to thank the esteemed Mr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden for his work and wish him all the best. We are sure that his successor, the distinguished Ambassador Vuk Žugić, will draw on his rich experience, the wisdom of the Chairmanship and the knowledge of the OSCE to assist participating States in the consistent implementation of their economic and environmental commitments.

Thank you for your attention.