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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1091st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 March 2016

On legislative acts in Abkhazia

Mr. Chairperson,

In the light of the question raised by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Georgia and other colleagues regarding the adoption of laws in Abkhazia, including those concerning the issuance of a new type of national passport, we should like to make the following comments.

In principle, we take the position that in the absence of legitimate representatives of Sukhum in this room it is inappropriate to say the least to discuss decisions taken by the authorities of independent Abkhazia. It is not entirely clear why this question has arisen now. As far as we are aware, the representatives of Abkhazia spoke of their plans a long time ago. There was no attempt to hide the details. We are certain that the Georgian Government also had an opportunity to resolve any concerns it might have had in direct dialogue with its neighbour. Furthermore, the Geneva International Discussions exist for this purpose.

We believe that it is the inalienable sovereign right of Abkhazia to make changes to its legislation on identity documents. One of the reasons for this decision by the Abkhazian authorities is obviously to strengthen the rule of law and legal order on its territory and, ultimately, to ensure the reliable protection of the rights of the citizens of the Republic of Abkhazia and of foreigners on the country's territory.

Thank you for your attention.