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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1138th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 March 2017

**On the issue of elections in the Republic of Abkhazia and
the Republic of South Ossetia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We confirm that in the absence of plenipotentiary representatives of the sovereign Transcaucasian Republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in this room, we do not consider it appropriate to comment in detail on the internal processes in these countries, particularly given that the electoral campaigns there have not been completed.

We would like to hope that colleagues' interest in the events in Abkhazia and South Ossetia will contribute to a better understanding of the progress achieved by the authorities in Sukhum and Tskhinval in the progressive State-building, institutional strengthening and democratic development of the young Republics.

With regard to the Russian-South Ossetian intergovernmental agreement on the procedure for the integration of separate units of the Armed Forces of the Republic of South Ossetia into the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, we should like to emphasize that, to date, work on its harmonization at the bilateral level has just begun. It would be considered inappropriate to anticipate its results.

We agree with the representative of the United States of America that issues of interaction between the Governments of Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia should be discussed within the framework of the Geneva International Discussions on Security and Stability in the Trans-Caucasus.

Thank you for your attention.