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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1120th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 November 2016

**In response to the report by
the Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania**

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in congratulating Ambassador Bernd Borchardt on his appointment to the responsible position of Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania and thank him for his report on its work this year.

In April next year, the OSCE will have been present in Albania for precisely 20 years. This auspicious date offers a good opportunity to conduct an intermediate review of the international assistance to the host authorities and to assess its effectiveness and relevance.

We are pleased to note that in this regard the OSCE Presence could serve as an outstanding example for other missions. Over a period of almost two decades of work in the country, the professional team has succeeded in making a vital contribution to Albania's institutional make-up during a period of transition and has strengthened its national capacity in a number of areas. We are pleased to note the high appreciation by the Albanian authorities of the assistance provided by the OSCE. We had confirmation once again of this in the statement made to the Permanent Council at the beginning of November this year by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania, Mr. Ditmir Bushati.

We agree that there is still a need for assistance by the OSCE Presence. We should like in particular to highlight the areas mentioned by Mr. Borchardt of combating violent extremism, terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking. It would be useful to step up co-operation in facing up to these challenges at a regional level with the support of the OSCE field missions in the Western Balkans. For our part, we are willing to consider ways of contributing to projects for improving the professional qualifications of members of law enforcement bodies.

We note the efforts of the OSCE Presence to assist the authorities in a wide range of humanitarian issues, including electoral problems and reform of the judicial system. We

agree that consensus in this regard within Albania itself is vital to the effectiveness of this work and the key indicator of real interest by the host country in external aid.

We trust that the OSCE Presence will pay continued attention to improving the effectiveness of its activities. The main indicator of this is the ability of the host country to meet its obligations on its own. In that connection, we call for the timely transfer to the national authorities of the powers provided for in the Mission's mandate in those areas where a suitable institutional framework has already been created.

We wish Ambassador Borchardt and the staff of the OSCE Presence further success in their difficult task.

Thank you for your attention.