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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1400th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 November 2022

In response to the Co-Chairs of the Geneva Discussions on the Trans-Caucasus

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome to the Permanent Council the distinguished Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions on Security and Stability in the Trans-Caucasus, namely, Ambassadors Ayşe Cihan Sultanoğlu (from the United Nations), Viorel Moşanu (from the OSCE) and Toivo Käär (from the European Union).

During the 56th round of the Discussions, held in Geneva on 5 October – the only round this year – all the participants confirmed their interest in restoring a regular negotiation process. The importance of preventing a repeat of the situation in which the Geneva format is “frozen” as a result of the politicized approaches of individual parties was raised at the Permanent Council recently, on 13 October. We consider it important to ensure that dialogue in this platform is sustained, and we trust that the next round will take place in early 2023. The glitches in the work of this agreed format are not conducive to the process of maintaining stability in the South Caucasus region.

We also hope that the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in Ergnet, which is helping effectively to solve pressing problems in the Georgian-South Ossetian border region, will continue its activities without any interruptions. We call for the work of the similar negotiation tool on the Abkhazian-Georgian border to be resumed.

On the whole, we believe that it is necessary to translate into practice as soon as possible the drawing up of a legally binding agreement on the non-use of force between the Georgian Government on the one hand, and the authorities in Sukhum and Tskhinval on the other, together with the delimitation of borders and their subsequent demarcation. That is the primary task of the negotiation process.

Russia confirms its willingness to co-operate with the Co-Chairs of the Geneva Discussions with regard to facilitating direct dialogue between the official representatives of Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia. To that end, we are willing to, so to speak, compare notes in Moscow, as has been done in the past.

In closing, we should like to wish the Co-Chairs success in their work. We hope that this work will be aimed at normalizing Georgia's relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia as rapidly as possible.

Thank you for your attention.