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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1336th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 September 2021

On the elections to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Madam Chairperson,

In the light of the statements made, we should like to exercise our right of reply.

First and foremost, we should like to thank our friends from Tajikistan, Armenia and Belarus for their support, their high praise for our elections and their good wishes.

We should like to inform the other speakers that the elections in the Russian Federation were held in full compliance with its domestic legislation and international commitments, including those relating to human rights.

Statements on non-recognition of the voting in Crimea and Sevastopol are null and void from a legal point of view. The Republic of Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol are integral parts of the Russian Federation and have full status as constituent entities. The peninsula's reunification with the Russian Federation was the result of a referendum held on 16 March 2014 in strict compliance with international democratic standards.

Crimean residents with Russian citizenship exercised their constitutional right to vote and to stand for election. Those who speak of not recognizing the result of the democratic choice of millions of Crimean residents are trying to deprive them of this basic political right.

The same can be said for Russian citizens in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Polling stations were set up in the Russian embassies there in accordance with international practice and in agreement with the authorities of these independent States, who provided the necessary assistance.

We are surprised at the outrage voiced over the ability of Russian citizens living in Ukraine to exercise their voting rights. In the regions of Ukraine bordering our country, many Russian citizens took advantage of the transport services available to them to cast their vote on Russian territory and then return home. Such a procedure is fully compliant with Russian law and is not contrary to electoral standards and practice.

Russian citizens residing in Transdniestria also benefited from the right to vote.

We have already discussed the subjects of civil society, the opposition, foreign agents and extremist and undesirable organizations on many occasions in the Permanent Council. We have also discussed the arbitrary refusal by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to monitor the Russian elections. We will not repeat ourselves.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the Russian Federation has always been and remains committed to its international commitments, including its OSCE commitments, to hold fair and transparent elections. And it fulfils these commitments in good faith – to the extent permitted by domestic law, which is the right of any sovereign State.

Thank you for your attention.