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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1259th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 February 2020

**In response to the reports by the Chairpersons of the Economic and Environmental  
Committee and the Human Dimension Committee**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful to the Chairpersons of the Committees for their detailed reports.

We should like to wish the distinguished Ambassador Neil Bush a speedy recovery.

We congratulate the distinguished Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan, Mr. Sherzod Asadov, on his appointment as Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee.

We note the varied and balanced programme of work prepared for the Committee this year. We are pleased at the inclusion in the agenda of traditional and pressing topics for the OSCE such as the development of tourism in the interests of economic growth and environmental protection, the impact of digital transformation on the labour market, and the creation of favourable conditions for the promotion of digital, trade and transport connectivity. We are counting on constructive and fruitful discussions.

At the same time, we believe it important to develop the horizons of co-operation and pay more attention to the search for unifying principles and to the theme of the alignment of integration processes in the OSCE area with a view to forming a Greater Eurasian Partnership.

We look forward to the start of the First Preparatory Meeting for the 28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on 17 and 18 February on combating corruption, notably in the context of the development of digital technologies. The Russian inter-agency delegation intends to take an active part in the event and present its rich experience in combating corruption, in particular by increasing transparency through the declaration of assets.

As always, we are relying on the expert assistance of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Ambassador Vuk Žugić, and also on close co-operation with the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption, Professor Paola Severino.

We wish Ambassador Asadov every success in his work at the helm of the Economic and Environmental Committee. You can always count on our support.

We congratulate the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, Mr. Ivo Šrámek, on the extension of his mandate as Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee for a second year. We hope that last year's experience will help to improve the quality of the work of this important tool of the Permanent Council.

However, we are obliged to note that this time too the Committee agenda presented gives grounds for criticism. The initial draft has remained unchanged, despite the comments and proposals by States. The thematic imbalance and inclusion of non-consensus topics remain. The issues listed are rather in the interests of one group of countries. The topics are mostly concerned with civil and political rights, with nothing specific on economic, social and cultural rights.

Such an approach is scarcely in keeping with Ljubljana Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/05 on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE, in accordance with which the States decided to strengthen confidence and "reinforce the sense of common purpose".

Furthermore, the work of the Committee to a large extent duplicates the plans of the Albanian Chairmanship, in particular, combating trafficking in human beings, freedom of expression, the media and information, tolerance and non-discrimination, and freedom of religion and belief. This raises the legitimate question whether there was even any co-ordination between the Czech and Albanian Government on the plans in the human dimension so as to avoid such duplication. We repeat that in line with Brussels Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/06 on the improvement of the consultative process, the OSCE Chairmanship, "in consultation with the participating States, will ... establish a work programme" of all three Committees, including the Human Dimension Committee. It also states that this programme should reflect the objectives and priorities of the Organization. Unfortunately, we once again see a different picture in practice.

Protection of the linguistic and educational rights of ethnic groups and national minorities, eliminating statelessness, preserving historical and cultural heritage, countering the glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism, non-interference in private and family life, the rights of the child, freedom of movement and the development of human contacts, and other topics are once again not covered. The mandate of the 2014 OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Basel regarding the elaboration of declarations on combating discrimination against Christians and Muslims has still not been implemented.

We expect these comments to be taken into account when finalizing the package of OSCE human dimension events for this year.

Thank you for your attention.