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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1307th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

25 March 2021

On the situation in the Republic of Belarus

Madam Chairperson,

Having listened to the statements by a number of States on the situation in the Republic of Belarus, we are forced to note with regret the stubborn unwillingness of Western countries to listen to and hear the arguments of the Belarusian Government and also of the OSCE participating States taking a constructive approach to this situation.

As before, we have no doubt that the Belarusian people and the leadership of the Republic are capable of dealing independently with all the tasks on the national agenda, within the framework of the Constitution and the law and, most importantly, without guidance from outside “well-wishers”.

We remind our Western colleagues of the need to comply with the norms of international law that allow States to exercise their inalienable right to independently choose their political, economic, social and cultural systems of development, without any kind of interference or pressure from another State or group of States. It is the principles of international law, not the notorious “rules-based order” or its Brussels version, that constitute the basis of just and equitable international relations, which form a space of equal and indivisible security and effective economic co-operation.

The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States is of vital importance for the stability of international relations. We condemn as a violation of this principle any interference aimed at organizing the overthrow of legitimate governments. The joint statement by the foreign ministers of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on strengthening the role of international law, adopted three days ago on 22 March, also guides us in this regard. It is our understanding that observance in good faith of the universally recognized principles and norms of international law precludes the application of double standards, which for a number of years now we have been clearly observing in the activities of several Western States at the OSCE, notably with respect to the Republic of Belarus.

On 17 March, the Subcommittee on Europe, Energy, the Environment and Cyber of the US House of Representatives spoke with Ms. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya via video link. The lawmakers proposed

allocating 30 million dollars in the draft budget for the 2022 fiscal year to support the so-called democratic aspirations of Belarus. What is this if not open interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State?

Another striking example of such unscrupulous behaviour by external actors is the statement by a group of States on 24 March in support of the establishment of some kind of International Accountability Platform for Belarus. Such steps cannot be interpreted other than as an attempt to meddle in the domestic affairs of another State. Not to mention the actual scope of the activities of this body, the membership of which cannot but raise questions on the part of an unbiased observer. Claims that it was set up at the initiative of civil society and the non-governmental sector, which would seem to guarantee its impartiality, do not stand up to scrutiny. The harsh attacks during the last six months on the leadership of Belarus by the collective West, which includes most of the co-authors of the aforementioned statement, sheds further light on who is interested in destabilizing the situation in the Republic. Given the plans announced by the opponents of the authorities in Belarus to hold mass rallies today, the deliberately provocative nature of the statement in support of this platform is evident. The goal is obvious – to “encourage” the anti-government forces and to push them from the outside towards participating in mass protests.

A reference was made here to the recent resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council on the situation in Belarus. Allegedly, it harshly criticizes the human rights situation in the country. While one could get the false impression that this international body was unanimous in its decision, that was not in fact the case. Of the 47 members of the Council, 20 voted in favour of the resolution, 7 voted against and another 20 abstained. In other words, the majority did not support the resolution.

As regards the notorious report by Mr. Wolfgang Benedek prepared under the Moscow Mechanism, which was mentioned in the statement, we repeat the following. We consider the use of this and other human rights instruments to settle scores and promote a narrow agenda based on the interests of a clique of countries to be unacceptable.

For the benefit of those who have “forgotten”, we shall remind you once again of what is written in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act: the participating States “will, *inter alia*, refrain from direct or indirect assistance to terrorist activities, or to subversive or other activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another participating State”. And also: “The participating States will refrain from any intervention, direct or indirect, individual or collective, in the internal or external affairs falling within the domestic jurisdiction of another participating State.”

Thank you for your attention.