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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1091st MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 March 2016

**In response to the report by the  
Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome Ms. Janina Hřebíčková, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, to this meeting of the Permanent Council and thank her for her detailed report on the basic thrusts of the field presence's work.

We note the Mission's positive role in supporting the systematic efforts of the Montenegrin authorities to establish the country's institutional and judicial structure. We are impressed by the style of the Mission's work, its close co-operation with the officials in Podgorica at various levels and the continued attention to requests by the host country in defining specific measures and the scope of the assistance. We are counting on the Mission to continue to operate in those areas where Montenegro still requires assistance and which are in accordance with the mandate of the field presence as agreed by the participating States.

We should particularly like to highlight the need for further assistance to the Montenegrin authorities in combating the threats to security affecting the entire Balkan region, namely organized crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in human beings and corruption. We welcome the Mission's contribution to improving the legal basis in Montenegro to meet these challenges and strengthening the potential of the country's law enforcement bodies.

We are in favour of a continuation of the support by the field presence in the demilitarization and destruction of surplus weapons in Montenegro under the Montenegro Demilitarization (MONDEM) programme in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is vital to the continued stabilization and security of the region.

We trust that the OSCE Mission will continue to pay attention to the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons. It will be important in our opinion for co-operation to be stepped up in this area with the OSCE field presences in neighbouring Balkan countries.

We agree on the whole with the concern expressed by the Head of the OSCE Mission regarding the aggravation of the internal political situation in Montenegro caused to a large extent by efforts by the country's leadership to join NATO. There is an evident political and ideological polarization of society and a worsening of socio-economic problems. It cannot be overlooked that in spite of assurances received by the Montenegrin authorities from Western capitals, involvement in the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance will do nothing to foster consolidation and prosperity. Moreover, Montenegro's fast-track accession to NATO would also preclude alternative approaches, which in turn could lead to further destabilization of the situation in the country and have a negative impact on the situation in the region as a whole.

We are counting on the political forces in Montenegro to assume responsibility for seeking a compromise that would make it possible to overcome the current deep schism in society.

In conclusion, we should like once again to thank Ms. Hřebíčková for her work and wish both her and her team further success.

Thank you for your attention.