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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1305th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

11 March 2021

On the report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Madam Chairperson,

We are grateful to the distinguished Ambassador Vuk Žugić for his detailed report on his activities during the period under review. Since this is your last scheduled report to the Permanent Council, allow me to thank you for your high level of professionalism and dedicated service as Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

Overall, we note the Office's effective work under the severe restrictions connected with the spread of the coronavirus infection. We support the efforts to raise the profile of the second "basket" in the context of the three dimensions of the OSCE's comprehensive security concept and also to create digital learning platforms to facilitate co-operation with participating States.

The Office made a significant contribution to the successful holding on 15 and 16 February of the First Preparatory Meeting for the 29th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) on enhancing the role of women in the economy. The Russian delegation advocated the development of international co-operation in creating equal opportunities for women and men with a view to their participation in economic activities. We look forward to the continuation of constructive dialogue on this theme within the framework of the forthcoming EEF events.

We welcome the Office's activities in building cross-border transport and energy corridors, strengthening good governance and combating corruption, developing human capital, reducing the risk of disasters and protecting the environment. It is important to unlock the unifying potential of the environmental and economic dimension.

In that connection, it is necessary to remember that the Co-ordinator's work should be based on the participating States' needs and carried out in strict accordance with his mandate. In that regard, we believe that some of the Office's plans for the current year require clarification, in particular the prospects for conducting a strategic assessment of long-standing and newly emerging threats to energy security in Central Asia.

We support the Office's efforts to implement projects aimed at strengthening international co-operation and overcoming the common challenges in the economic and environmental sphere. Particular attention should be paid to the post-COVID-19 crisis economic recovery and to the rebuilding of the sectors most affected by the pandemic, including the tourism industry. The development of the digital economy and the strengthening of connectivity in the OSCE area with a view to building a Greater Eurasian Partnership also remain relevant.

We still look forward to the realization of the distinguished Ambassador Žugić's initiative of holding a separate follow-up event to the 1990 CSCE Bonn Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe. We believe a frank discussion is long overdue on the prospects for reviving the spirit of co-operation and the commitment to the principles laid down in the concluding document of that Conference.

The Office's efforts to strengthen co-operation with the relevant international organizations on various aspects of economic and environmental activities, primarily with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, deserve support. The main task in doing so is to avoid duplication with other multilateral bodies.

In conclusion, we should like once again to thank the distinguished Ambassador Žugić for his work and fruitful co-operation, and also to wish him good luck in his future endeavours. At the same time, we wish the Office's professional team every success in their future work. As in the past, you can count on our support.

Thank you for your attention.