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**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE  
CONCLUDING MEETING OF THE 26th OSCE ECONOMIC AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Prague, 5 September 2018

**Promoting economic progress and security in the OSCE area through  
innovation, human capital development, and good public and corporate  
governance**

**Opening session**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We welcome the participants in this Concluding Meeting of the 26th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, which, as is customary, is taking place in the beautiful and historic city of Prague. As in past years, thorough work has gone into this meeting's organization and the choice of themes. It is based on the substantive discussions and recommendations of the two preparatory meetings held in Vienna and Venice. In this connection, we thank the Italian Chairmanship and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and Ambassador Vuk Žugić personally, for their consistent efforts to ensure that the 26th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum is an effective process.

It is noteworthy that the 1975 Helsinki Final Act included a provision that in its way was a precursor to today's discussion on the digital economy. This fundamental document spoke of the possibilities for developing co-operation in computer, communication and information technologies, including their use for management systems and production processes.

Today, we are experiencing a real technological boom in the digitalization of production, logistics, economic management systems and many other areas. Added to this digitalization is an increasing connectivity of people, organizations and machines. This is one of the main factors and driving forces of the digital economy.

The digital economy brings many benefits. It improves people's quality of life, increases labour productivity, makes companies more competitive, reduces costs, and more. But there are also clear risks, for example, the digital gap between the more and less

economically developed countries, between central and more remote regions, and the problem of unemployment.

Here in Prague, we should therefore concentrate on the positive aspects of the digital economy that will ultimately strengthen security, and on looking for solutions to the associated socio-economic problems that arise. Human capital, training and retraining will be of key importance for developing the digital economy.

Russia is implementing the national programme Digital Economy of the Russian Federation, which runs through to 2024. It covers five main areas: normative regulation, human resources and education, developing research potential and technology, information infrastructure and information security. We are also working actively with our partners in the Eurasian Economic Union to implement the first stage of this organization's digital agenda for 2018–2019.

The digital economy is a new and complex phenomenon that offers exciting opportunities for exploration. It has been studied and analysed in many international forums in recent years. The OSCE's task, as we see it, is to examine the digital economy from its particular angle, adding to what is already being done by the relevant organizations. In this respect, we support the Italian Chairmanship's plans to develop common approaches by the participating States on the digital economy within the OSCE's second dimension in time for the upcoming Ministerial Council meeting in Milan.

Thank you for your attention.