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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1180th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 March 2018

**In response to the statements on the Russian Federation
presidential election**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to express our sincere thanks to our colleagues from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for their congratulations following Vladimir Putin's victory in the presidential election. We will certainly pass on your warm words to Moscow.

I should like to use my right to reply to make a few points in response to the distinguished representative of the European Union.

First, regarding the opening of polling stations on the territory of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, we need to stress that this was done with the agreement of these independent countries' governments, which gave Russia considerable assistance in organizing the voting process.

Incidentally, while our distinguished Western colleagues here are busy playing up isolated points from the assessment of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), focusing solely on the negative, your own leaders continue to congratulate Vladimir Putin on his victory in the election and re-election to the post of President of Russia. Congratulations have been received from President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland, President of the United States of America Donald Trump, President of the Republic of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid, President of Hungary János Áder, Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orbán, Federal President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Federal Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella, President of the Republic of Bulgaria Rumen Radev, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Spain Mariano Rajoy Brey, Prime Minister of Italy Paolo Gentiloni, Grand Duke of Luxembourg Henri, Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway Erna Solberg, President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö,

President of the Republic of Croatia Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Czech Republic Miloš Zeman and many others.

Furthermore, a number of European Parliament deputies who were among the international observers, for example Stefano Maullu (European People's Party, Italy) and Jaromír Kohlíček (European United Left–Nordic Green Left party group, Czech Republic), noted the effective organization, transparent voting process, and high voter turnout. They stressed that what was most important was that the minor shortcomings noted did not alter the overall genuinely positive picture. Stefano Maullu particularly noted the free nature of the voting in Russia and said that voters demonstrated a high level of trust in the incumbent president.

Regarding the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol, we have already given explanations on this point and will not repeat them.

In accordance with the established practice, we will brief our colleagues on the Russian Federation presidential election during discussions under the “Any other business” section of the agenda.

Let me conclude with an interesting tweet by President of the United States Donald Trump on 21 March. I would like to quote it in English: “I called President Putin of Russia to congratulate him on his election victory (in past, Obama called him also). The Fake News Media is crazed because they wanted me to excoriate him. They are wrong! Getting along with Russia (and others) is a good thing, not a bad thing.”

Thank you for your attention.