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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1277th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

30 July 2020

On the presentation to mark the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act

Mr. Chairperson,

The First of August is a most important commemorative date for our Organization. Forty-five years ago, there appeared a document outlining the world order under which we all dreamed of living.

Everyone remembers that the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe was meant to define the “rules of the game” for the coexistence of the two opposing systems during the Cold War. Later on, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, once the confrontation between the two blocs in Europe had ended, the political process launched in Helsinki in 1975 became a source of hope for the creation of a new security architecture in the Euro-Atlantic area.

The key principles of the Helsinki Final Act should have become our “gospel”, namely: supporting the United Nations and enhancing its role in strengthening international peace, security and justice; the indivisibility of security; respect for each other’s sovereign equality; refraining from the use of force; the right of peoples to determine their own fate and resolve issues concerning their frontiers in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant provisions of international law. I should like to emphasize here that the approaches and rules formulated 45 years ago have not lost any of their relevance.

I would ask you, distinguished colleagues: is today’s OSCE truly the Organization that we were busy constructing during all those years? Unfortunately, a lot has remained mere wishful thinking. The world has not become safer. Regional conflicts flare up regularly. The dividing lines in Europe are, together with NATO’s infrastructure, shifting eastwards. The system of agreements on strategic stability and arms control is being methodically and deliberately destroyed. Illegal unilateral sanctions and harsh protectionist measures are applied on a large scale. There is widespread flouting of the provisions of international law, which are ever more frequently subjected to selective interpretation and application. Dubious, pseudo-legal concepts of the “rules-based order” type are touted as substitutes for the United Nations-inspired foundations of the modern world order.

I propose that today we should not get drawn into another round of confrontation by seeking to apportion blame for the existing state of affairs. Those accustomed to thinking deeply already understand, as it is, the fundamental reasons for these crises in the Euro-Atlantic area. They are likewise conscious of the

fact that our Organization's potential is greatly underutilized. For the OSCE has not succeeded in becoming a kind of "European Security Council". Instead of building bridges between conflict parties, our unique entity is in many respects "running idle". Surely it was created not for the trading of accusations but to support, in a professional manner, the search for points of convergence, to facilitate rapprochement and the development of responses to common challenges?

We are convinced that the starting point for our dialogue should continue to be the as yet unrealized principle of equal and indivisible security enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the Charter for European Security and the Astana Commemorative Declaration, the anniversaries of which we have been celebrating in the course of this and last year. Our priorities should continue to be the de-escalation of tensions in Europe and countering challenges that are common to all countries – first and foremost, terrorism, the drug threat, cybercrime and organized crime. The OSCE is also capable of making a contribution to the alignment of integration processes in Eurasia aimed at constructing a "Greater Eurasian Partnership".

Finally, I should like to express the hope that common sense and the basic instinct of self-preservation, together with the responsibility that we have vis-à-vis our countries' citizens, will ultimately help us to abandon approaches based on narrow national interests and confrontation, and to overcome the growing tendency towards international legal nihilism. There is after all no need to provide proof of the value of co-ordinated collective efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and in Eurasia. The main point is that the story of how the CSCE/OSCE came into being remains a shining example for us of how multidimensional agreements can be reached even in the most difficult times. Let us not forget this.

Thank you for your attention.