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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1089th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 February 2016

**In response to the address by the  
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Mr. Araz Azimov**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are delighted to welcome our distinguished colleague, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Mr. Araz Boyukagha oglu Azimov, to the Permanent Council again. We understand and relate to the Azerbaijani Government's view of the current situation in the OSCE area and of the main tasks of the Organization and its various institutions.

We take note of Azerbaijan's growing role in regional and international affairs.

Like our partners from Azerbaijan, we are not happy with the state of affairs in the OSCE. In the past few years, it could really have been possible to do much more for the Organization's institutional development and to expand the co-operation between participating States on the basis of the norms of international law and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act. We are, however, confident that the OSCE can once again make a constructive contribution to restoring trust and co-operation, and bringing States together on the basis of common standards and interests.

As regards the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement, the common position of the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group will be outlined by the distinguished Permanent Representative of France. From our perspective, we can assure you that Russia fully shares the concern that not enough progress has been made towards resolving the conflict, despite the number of meetings held, including meetings held not only at a high level but at the highest level. As a Co-Chair country of the OSCE Minsk Group, in the future we intend to continue championing joint mediation efforts to search for a balanced solution to the problem, and one that would satisfy the interests of the parties involved.

We support Azerbaijan's interest in mainstreaming the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension, all the more so because the German Chairmanship has declared this dimension to be one of the priority areas on the agenda. The issue of sustainable

connectivity in the context of a globalized world economy, alongside dynamic integration processes and the intertwining of economic and environmental interests, is becoming increasingly relevant at the moment. We trust that the upcoming discussions, including the business forum planned in Berlin, will help to make the OSCE's work in the economic and environmental dimension more systemic and strategic, while prompting the Organization to harmonize and couple integration processes in Europe and Eurasia so as to create a single economic and humanitarian area stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. It is really this, and not the ambition to create closed economic unions, which guarantees the prosperity of the continent that we share.

We understand Azerbaijan's reaction to attempts to exert control from outside. It is the inalienable and sovereign right of a host country to define the form and specific areas of co-operation between the Organization and its participating States in the implementation of OSCE commitments and principles.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia and Azerbaijan are linked by a relationship as strategic partners in the Trans-Caucasus and Caspian region, based on the principles of equal rights, good-neighbourly relations and centuries-long traditions of friendship and mutual respect. Our countries have similar positions on the majority of the burning issues on the international agenda. Active inter-parliamentary dialogue and economic co-operation have been established and improved, while humanitarian ties are going from strength to strength.

I should like to take this opportunity to underscore once again that our country is interested in continuing to deepen the co-operation with Azerbaijan in many fields, in the interest of our peoples.

Thank you for your attention.