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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1095th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 April 2016

**In response to the report by the
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Mr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, to the Permanent Council meeting. We found his report on the work and plans for the near term as well as his remarks about the prioritization of the activities in the OSCE's second basket this year interesting.

We note the positive outcomes of the First Preparatory Meeting for the Twenty-Fourth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on the theme of strengthening stability and security through co-operation and good governance. We trust that the remaining economic and environmental events for the 2016 cycle in Berlin and Prague will be successful.

We support the Co-ordinator's pragmatic approach to identifying possible areas for OSCE work in the second dimension. We agree that work on combating corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism should continue to be key focal areas in this dimension. We agree that it would be useful to hold regional events on these topics, including in conjunction with specialized international organizations and OSCE institutions. We are pleased that the OSCE Handbook on Combating Corruption will soon be ready. The experience compiled in this publication will be much sought after by the participating States.

At present, migration issues have become firmly established as an OSCE priority. We note with satisfaction that the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities is also playing a role according to its capacities and mandate in solving the problems caused by the uncontrolled flows of migrants overwhelming Europe. We hope that existing best practices on managing labour migration might come in useful for the participating States that are forced to deal with the complex matters of admitting and housing migrants.

We note the co-operation between the Co-ordinator and the Transport Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in holding joint events under Phase III of the UNECE Euro-Asian Transport Links project, his assistance to the OSCE field missions in organizing and holding seminars on trade and the harmonization of cross-border customs procedures, the use of renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency.

We all share the challenges of ever more environmental and material damage caused by natural and human-induced disasters. In our view, the Co-ordinator could have a significant impact here, assisting the participating States in exchanging the relevant information and removing the obstacles to providing timely and effective international assistance to the countries concerned.

We have taken note of the information on the Co-ordinator's activities on assessing the impact of climate change on security. We should like to recall that the forum for official negotiations on this global challenge is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We continue to have serious doubts about the added value of expanding the Office's agenda to include participation in discussions on this complex and sensitive issue. It is important that the work of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities contrive to mitigate the challenges and threats in this regard, without artificially fanning the flames. With regard to the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, we believe that the OSCE's activities in that area should be carried out exclusively on the basis of requests from host States. This is entirely a matter for the Aarhus Centres operating in the OSCE area.

Today the world is changing at a breathtaking rate. Globalization is encompassing entirely new areas of life. This goes hand in hand with increasing interdependence, dynamic integration processes, and interests of various States and non-State actors in the area of international co-operation which are densely interwoven. The top priority on both the global and regional agendas is joint work towards collective solutions for the burning socio-economic issues of today. In these circumstances, as we have often mentioned, it is important to organize the Office's work on the basis of the strategic objective that all participating States share, of increasing the unifying potential of co-operation. This means expert support for joint efforts by the participating States to define the OSCE's contribution to creating a single economic area from Vancouver to Vladivostok as the economic foundation of a future security community, clarifying possible areas for co-operation among the various integration organizations in our common area and eliminating the dividing lines that still remain.

In our view, the OSCE could play a useful role in coupling together integration processes in the West and in the East, facilitating harmonization among the interests and requirements of the North and South of the continent, providing a platform for experts to exchange opinions on the possibilities of integrating legislation, standards and procedures, and economic and financial policy. We trust that the high-level business conference on economic connectivity to be held by the German Chairmanship in Berlin on 18 and 19 May 2016 will provide added impetus to that work.

We consider that our comments will be useful in fine-tuning the plans for the work of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities this year.

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In conclusion, we should like to wish Mr. Yigitgüden and his team success in the future in their important work.

Thank you for your attention.