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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1161st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 October 2017

**In response to the address by the President of the
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ms. Christine Muttonen**

Ms. Muttonen,

We have listened attentively to your statement and share many of your views. First, we support your intention to use the platform of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly more actively to discuss the most pressing issues of our Organization. Our readiness to develop such co-operation is clearly confirmed by the Russian parliamentary delegation's active participation in the work of the Assembly, led by the Deputy Chairman of the State Duma, Pyotr Tolstoy.

Under the current circumstances, parliamentary diplomacy is more in demand than ever before, as evidenced by the 137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which concluded yesterday in St. Petersburg. This forum became the most representative in the history of the Union – it was attended by over 160 delegations, representing almost every State in the world. Incidentally, Russia took all necessary measures to ensure the smooth arrival of all the Assembly participants. We believe that in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly it is necessary to support the principle of free inter-parliamentary co-operation, without attempts to restrict the communication of parliamentarians. In this regard, we are grateful to you, Ms. Muttonen, and in general to the Austrian Chairmanship for ensuring the presence of all the members of the national delegations in the activities of the Assembly that took place under your leadership.

As the discussions at the sessions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Minsk and Andorra la Vella showed, the issue of combating new challenges and threats, especially terrorism, has become the main focus of activities. We are grateful for the support for the Russian initiative on the establishment of a committee to counter the terrorist threat. Its first meeting at the autumn session of the Assembly demonstrated the timeliness and relevance of the establishment of such a body. The unanimous endorsement at the previous Annual Session of the Assembly in Minsk of the resolution “Strengthening the Role of the OSCE in Countering Terrorism”, which was proposed by Nikolay Kovalev, member of the Russian

delegation and special representative of the Assembly on this subject, also addresses the same issue. It is important to continue to carry out active work in the area of counter-terrorism.

We are pleased to note your personal contribution to the organization in March of this year of the major conference “OSCE Security Policy – Female Perspectives”, at which Russia was represented at the highest level by the Chairperson of the Federation Council, Valentina Matviyenko, and the Deputy Chairperson of the State Duma, Irina Yarovaya. We also value your participation in the Parliamentary Conference on Combating International Terrorism, held in St. Petersburg, for the first time co-organized by the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. It is important that it culminated in the adoption of joint conclusions of the leaders of these two parliamentary institutions. This precedent is particularly necessary in order to strengthen inter-parliamentary co-operation on a wide range of issues.

We share the view that there is a need to strengthen co-operation with the OSCE’s Mediterranean Partners, as demonstrated by the Mediterranean Forum, which took place on the “margins” of the autumn session of the Assembly. This topic is inextricably linked with the discussion of the causes and consequences of the unprecedented flow of migration to Europe and the increase in terrorist attacks on the continent. We hope that the Assembly will continue to address these issues during the future Chairmanship of Italy in the OSCE.

An equally important topic for the future work of the Assembly is the consideration of issues of the protection of the rights of national minorities, including their cultural and historical identity. This topic has become particularly important after the adoption in Ukraine of the odious Law on Education, which roughly tramples upon the rights of national minorities to learn and use their native language. We hope that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will give an objective assessment of this law and the negative consequences of its application.

We support your intention to expand co-operation with other international organizations in the area of election observation. We consider it important to return to the ideas of establishing close co-operation with observers from the Commonwealth of Independent States, particularly representatives of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, in the interests of developing common approaches to monitoring electoral processes.

In our opinion, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which includes parliamentarians from countries representing various economic groupings, could seriously address the topic of the interconnectedness of regional and subregional integration processes in the expansion of international economic co-operation. It is noteworthy that today, the Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Tigran Sargsyan, will also take the floor at this Permanent Council meeting and will discuss that organization’s work to expand economic co-operation with other States and regional structures.

As you can see, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly needs to discuss many important topics and develop appropriate measures to promote mutual understanding between the participating States. We believe that only through combining efforts will the Assembly be able to strengthen its role as the leading platform for constructive dialogue and the discussion of the most pressing security issues in the OSCE’s vast area of responsibility.

Thank you for your attention.