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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1325th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 July 2021

**On the review of co-operation with the OSCE's Asian Partners**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the distinguished representatives of the OSCE's Asian Partners for Co-operation to today's meeting of the Permanent Council.

The importance of co-operation between the participating States and the Asian Partners on the entire range of issues pertaining to comprehensive security was reaffirmed in the relevant declaration that was adopted at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Tirana on 4 December 2020.

Regular consultation within the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group is a key mechanism for maintaining contacts. We have traditionally called for the agenda of the Group's meetings to include the most pressing international issues of interest both to participating States and to partner countries. It goes without saying that the issues taken up for consideration should be consistent with the Organization's mandate.

In the challenging context of an economic downturn and the need to tackle the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, preventing and countering corruption are indisputably of great significance. The necessity of using budgetary resources rationally and ensuring transparency and accountability in the activities of public authorities has become particularly relevant.

Russia has traditionally supported the OSCE's efforts to promote best-practice standards and tools for combating corruption on the basis of existing commitments in this area, including the relevant decisions adopted by the Ministerial Council in Sofia and Basel in 2004 and 2014, respectively, and the Dublin Declaration on Good Governance of 2012.

At the same time, we are unfortunately obliged to note that this year the thematic content of the programme of work was established on the basis of non-consensus approaches. The partner countries allowed themselves to be carried away excessively by the pursuit of their own priorities to the detriment of the interests of the OSCE participating States and stepped out of the Organization's framework of responsibility. As a result, discussions took a confrontational turn and controversial concepts were imposed,

such as the “Indo-Pacific region”, “non-traditional security threats” and the like. The “added value” of discussions of that kind at the OSCE is close to zero.

It is instead essential to promote a unifying agenda and seek common responses to global challenges. In our view, greater attention should be paid to the strengthening of confidence-building measures and the reduction of conflict potential in the region, to such tasks as ensuring the sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery of countries’ economies and the worst-affected sectors, restoring severed trade and economic ties, strengthening the transport connectivity of States, and aligning integration processes in the Eurasian space.

The annual OSCE Asian Conference is an important form of co-operation with our partners. We thank the Government of Thailand for its proposal to host the Conference this year. It is a pity that the epidemiological situation does not allow us to meet face-to-face. We supported the Permanent Council’s approval of the package of decisions on the dates, venue and agenda of the Conference. We are counting on constructive and fruitful discussions on the theme of devising “common responses to emerging challenges in advancing comprehensive security”.

The situation in Afghanistan calls for particular attention at present. The withdrawal of contingents of foreign troops has triggered a surge in politico-military tensions. Active hostilities are ongoing in most of the country’s provinces. The Taliban movement already controls a significant proportion of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and continues to consolidate its positions.

We urge all the players involved in the conflict to refrain from the use of force. We are convinced that only constructive direct dialogue between the belligerents can put a stop to this war that has gone on for so many years.

In general, we are willing to work together with the Central Asian republics, Afghanistan and the Partners for Co-operation on a unifying agenda with a broad scope, not least as part of a “Greater Eurasian Partnership” conceived as a space for open, mutually beneficial co-operation on equal terms.

The OSCE’s contacts with the Asian Partners for Co-operation should be developed by intensifying the involvement of their representatives in the Organization’s day-to-day work. All the necessary regulatory conditions for that are in place.

Thank you for your attention.