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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1213th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 January 2019

**In response to the report by
the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have listened attentively to the report by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Mr. Henrik Villadsen has embarked on his work under difficult circumstances. We support him in his efforts to promote the OSCE's commitments by assisting in the carrying out of reforms in Ukraine and implementing projects for the development of civil society institutions. This is particularly relevant given the protracted nature of the internal Ukrainian crisis, coupled with rampant radical nationalism, infringement of the rights of national minorities and the persecution of dissent. It is important for the projects implemented with the support of the Co-ordinator to take account of the legal rights and interests of all citizens in the country, regardless of where they live or their ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious affiliation.

We believe that priority attention should be given to preventing Ukraine from deviating from its obligations in the area of human rights. The initiatives promoted by the current Ukrainian authorities are blatantly discriminatory. This applies to the Law on Education, the latest legislative initiatives relating to religion, and the proposed draft law on ensuring the functioning of Ukrainian as the State language. Such actions require timely assessment. There is a need for more active contact with the Ukrainian authorities to rectify discriminatory approaches when the corresponding initiatives are being elaborated. We urge Mr. Villadsen to co-ordinate more closely in this regard with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. The Co-ordinator should also make efforts to facilitate dialogue by the Ukrainian authorities with representatives of national minorities living in the country.

Due attention should also be paid to fulfilment by the Ukrainian Government of its OSCE commitments to safeguard freedom of journalistic activity and of the media. The worsening situation in this regard has been noted by many human rights organizations. This includes the recent report by Human Rights Watch, which notes a growth in the number of incidents of harassment and obstacles to journalistic activity in Ukraine.

The Co-ordinator's work also calls for co-operation with the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). At the same time, the programme activities should avoid duplication of the SMM's functions. They should also take account of the agreements reached in the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk. In our view, the Office's project activities should aim to help resolve urgent internal Ukrainian problems, with concrete results presented to the participating States.

In conclusion, I should like to wish Mr. Villadsen success in his new position.

Thank you for your attention.