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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1209th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 December 2018

**On the occasion of Human Rights Day**

Mr. Chairperson,

On 10 December, the international community celebrated Human Rights Day, which was established by the United Nations. It was on this day in 1948 that the UN General Assembly approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of this document, elaborated immediately after the end of the Second World War, the most tragic period in the twentieth century, and at the dawn of the formation of the United Nations and a new world order. Together with two human rights covenants, the Universal Declaration laid the foundation for the modern international system for promoting and protecting human rights. Seventy years after its adoption, it has lost none of its relevance and to this day is the guideline for universal human rights.

The year 2018 marked another anniversary, the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 established the indivisible, interdependent and interrelated nature of all categories of human rights, signifying a new stage in the development of the doctrine of international law in this area and consolidating the position of States from all regions of the world.

These important dates present an opportunity to review some of the progress made and to outline new areas for our work together. This is all the more necessary because, in spite of some successes, attempts have not ceased to adapt human rights to the opportunistic interests of various groups of countries. There is a continuing dangerous tendency to use contrived human rights concerns as an excuse to meddle in the internal affairs of sovereign States, and to apply unilateral coercive measures and military force. In a number of countries there are attacks on freedom of the media, in particular under the flimsy pretext of countering propaganda; linguistic, educational and religious rights are being trampled on; and attempts are made to glorify Nazism and rewrite the history of the Second World War and the decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

These nefarious practices need to be abandoned and the focus shifted to the promotion of equitable and mutually respectful dialogue on human rights.

The results of the Ministerial Council meeting in Milan confirmed the crisis in the OSCE human dimension and, as we have noted on more than one occasion, the need for a fundamental reform to “cleanse” it of imbalances and double standards. Of a dozen draft decisions on human dimension issues, only three were adopted – on the safety of journalists, on combating violence against women, and on combating child trafficking. Various countries once again sabotaged the fulfilment of the mandate of the 2014 Ministerial Council meeting in Basel regarding the elaboration of declarations on the protection of Christians, Muslims and members of other religious. Moreover, the very mention of the major world religions in OSCE documents has become taboo today. In that context, dubious if not confrontational wording and concepts were advanced, which resulted in the failure to adopt a number of draft decisions. We urge the future Slovak Chairmanship to set about improving the situation in the third basket so as to strengthen the human rights potential of all countries.

Thank you for your attention.