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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1073rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 October 2015

On the elections in Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

We also followed the first round of local elections in Ukraine and took note of the report by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) election observation mission.

We are surprised at the marked contrast between the glowing accounts given by our colleagues and the content of the observation mission's report. This is something of a strange and selective aberration.

The Mission's frequently quoted conclusion that "the elections were well organized" and "generally showed respect for the democratic process" is in marked contrast to the many violations of OSCE standards cited in the report. There are nine direct references to non-compliance with international standards alone. If this is the ODIHR's "gold standard", we are obliged yet again to conclude that "all that glitters is not gold".

To judge by the ODIHR report, Ukraine's election legislation is far from perfect. Implementation problems were encountered in many electoral districts. There were also considerable problems with the work and composition of the election commissions, which frequently took decisions based on political motives rather than the law. In some regions, political parties were excluded. The Communist Party of Ukraine is generally banned. The media are extremely dependent on political and business interests.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) could not vote at all, not because they were physically prevented from doing so but because the legislation in force does not provide for the possibility of IDPs voting.

The ODIHR experts who wrote the report were evidently not fully aware of the content of the Minsk Package of Measures, otherwise they would have taken account in their report of the fact that the inhabitants of Donbas did not vote because the election modalities in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions have not yet been agreed by the sides in the

political subgroup of the Trilateral Contact Group and have not been formalized by way of corresponding Ukrainian legislation.

We should like once again to stress that the use by the ODIHR of non-consensus terminology in its report further undermines confidence in this OSCE executive structure.

Elections did not take place at all in a host of villages in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions under the control of the central authorities. On the basis of a decision by the military-civil administration, 525,000 voters remained disenfranchised. For some reason, however, the ODIHR mentions this information only in a footnote in small print.

Elections were not held in Mariupol, Krasnoarmiisk and Svatove. By a strange coincidence, these were all towns where good results were forecast for the so-called opposition parties. The election situation in Odessa is not completely clear.

Although it wasn't obliged to do so, even the ODIHR noted that the election campaign took place against a backdrop of growing disillusionment with the political establishment, an ongoing economic crisis and the slow implementation of anti-corruption policies. It is this in the first instance that characterizes the difficult circumstances under which the elections took place. It is evident that it is not the so-called "separatists" who are preventing Kyiv from fighting corruption, fixing the economy or getting on with business rather than stark populism and inflating anti-Russian hysteria.

As for assertions about "reloading" the system of authority in Ukraine and "democratic consolidation", we should like to recall once again that a peaceful settlement in Ukraine is contingent on full compliance with the Minsk Package of Measures, which calls for the adoption of a new constitution in Ukraine taking account of the special status of certain regions of Donbas. For this "reloading" of the political system to be complete, there is a need for genuinely inclusive political dialogue with the participation of all regions taking account of the interests of all population groups in the country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.