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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1186th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 May 2018

**In response to the report of the Head of the  
OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe**

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in welcoming Ms. Tuula Yrjölä, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, and thank her for her detailed report.

A study of the Office's work since the new mandate came into effect in June 2017 demonstrates that this transformation has benefitted the OSCE field operation in Tajikistan. It has been possible to revise the mechanism for co-operation with the authorities in Dushanbe within the Partnership Platform, improve co-ordination, agree on priorities and thus increase the practical impact.

In our view, one of the most important areas of assistance is the work on supporting the capacity-building of Tajikistan's border service. The chronic instability in neighbouring Afghanistan makes it necessary to pay constant attention to this work with a focus on strengthening the security of the Tajik-Afghan border. A lot is being done in this regard at the bilateral level, including by the Russian Federation, and through the Collective Security Treaty Organization. As you know, the Office is providing technical assistance to the Tajik Inter-Agency Secretariat for Border Management and Security. We would be grateful for additional details on this co-operation.

We believe it important to pay greater attention to border personnel training projects on a scale comparable with the Patrol Planning and Leadership training programme, now completed, for Tajik and Afghan border personnel. There is a need to recruit Afghan border personnel to participate in it.

We note the Office's efforts to assist with humanitarian demining operations. We welcome this work and trust that it will be continued. We are also pleased to see that the Office is not winding down its support for reform of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the country. At the same time, there is no information about efforts to improve ways for the Tajik law enforcement authorities to combat smuggling and illicit drug trafficking.

We are gratified to note the Office's increased attention to the problems of the second dimension. We hope that the interest in economic and environmental questions will translate into an increase in the number of relevant projects.

We listened with interest to the section of the report by the Head of the Office devoted to the development of regional co-operation, in particular the stepping up of political and socio-economic contacts between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia and Tajikistan are developing a strategic partnership that covers a very wide range of co-operation activities. Our two nations are bound by shared history and the intertwined fate of thousands of people. No one is more interested than Russia in the steady and safe development of our friendly neighbour Tajikistan. We wish Ambassador Yrjölä and her team success and efficient work in the interests of the host country.

Thank you for your attention.