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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1233rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 June 2019

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

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, Mr. Henrik Villadsen, for the report on the work of his office, which is being conducted in difficult conditions due to domestic political turbulence within the country and also the Ukrainian Government's ongoing military operation in Donbas.

The former powers that be in Ukraine have left a "thorny legacy". Discriminatory legislation has been adopted: the new laws on education and the State language encroach upon the rights of millions of inhabitants of Ukraine. There continues to be suppression of religious rights. The pressure exerted on freedom of speech and on the media has not abated. The despicable "Mirotvorets" website, which calls for reprisals against dissenters, continues to operate. Kirill Vyshinsky, head of the RIA Novosti Ukraine portal, has been under arrest for more than a year, merely for having carried out his professional duties.

Against such a backdrop, an even greater responsibility falls on all the structures of our Organization, including the Project Co-ordinator, with regard to tracking and responding to Ukraine's violations of its OSCE commitments. In view of the shake-up in the composition of the Verkhovna Rada and the Ukrainian Government announced by the new authorities, what is called for now is to work together actively with the new figures in the State apparatus in order to rectify the already adopted discriminatory measures and to prevent the adoption of new ones. It is necessary to develop further the Co-ordinator's close co-operation with the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and also with the institutions of the Council of Europe. This is particularly important, given that the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe intends to analyse the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of Ukrainian as the State Language.

Mr. Villadsen,

As part of your work you pay attention to how dialogue within the country is progressing. We cannot but remark that there is a huge amount of work to be done in that respect. The previous Ukrainian authorities understood social dialogue mainly in the sense of co-operating with nationalistic circles. They blatantly pandered to right-wing radicals, adopting discriminatory measures to please them. It is important that the

projects in which the Co-ordinator is involved should promote inclusive dialogue without any discrimination of people on the basis of their ethnicity, language, religion or place of residence. We call for a particularly close watch to be kept on how Ukraine is fulfilling its commitments with regard to the protection of religious rights and of freedom of belief and religion. Facilitating arrangements for dialogue between the authorities and representatives of national minorities is especially imperative.

Your office's mandate envisages the conduct of a project aimed at undertaking a comprehensive survey of Ukraine's legislation in the area of human rights. Bearing in mind the significant recent amendments to Ukrainian legislation, we would be grateful for some information on when we may expect the relevant report to be issued.

We trust that you will establish effective operational co-ordination with the new management of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. Such co-ordination must continue to be based on preventing any duplication and on properly taking into account all efforts undertaken to resolve the internal Ukrainian crisis, including decisions of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk.

We assume that the work of your office, including extrabudgetary activities, will continue to rest on the principles of openness and accountability vis-à-vis the participating States.

In conclusion, allow me to wish you, Mr. Villadsen, every possible success in your challenging work.

Thank you for your attention.