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PC.DEL/1348/19
22 November 2019

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1248th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 November 2019

On the anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement

Mr. Chairperson,

Today is a special day. On this day in 1995 – 24 years ago – the text of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, known unofficially as the Dayton Peace Agreement, was agreed upon. The agreement put an end to the hostilities of 1992 to 1995, as a result of which some 100,000 people died and around 2 million were forced to leave their former places of residence.

Russia has always advocated compliance with Dayton's basic principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, ensuring broad powers for the two entities (Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), as well as equal rights for the three constituent peoples, Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. Attempts to impose unilateral approaches, such as the Declaration by the Bosniak Party for Democratic Action of 14 September this year, which proposes a revision of the Dayton constitution in a manner unacceptable to two of the original constituent peoples, are inadmissible.

We are of the firm belief that responsibility for what is happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be transferred in full to the local authorities. The closure of the Office of the High Representative there is long overdue.

We believe that the adoption by the Presidium of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 19 November this year of a decision to appoint the Serb Zoran Tegeltija as Chairperson of the country's Council of Ministers is an important step towards strengthening internal Bosnian political dialogue. We look forward to the rapid confirmation of his candidacy and that of his departmental ministers by the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We hope that the conclusion of the procedure for forming a Council of Ministers will no longer be hampered by politicizing demands calling for activation of the NATO Membership Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Attempts to draw Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Alliance merely exacerbate animosities within the country and distract the Bosnian parties from working on reform.

We find the artificial increase in external pressure on Republika Srpska as an entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and on the legally elected Bosnian-Serb leaders to be unacceptable. We are opposed in principle to unilateral sanctions.

We welcome the unanimous adoption by the United Nations Security Council on 5 November this year of a resolution to extend the mandate of the European Union's Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a further year. We note with approval the balanced language of the document and the absence of elements that could exacerbate differences within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As a guarantor country of the Dayton Agreement, Russia will continue to advocate its strict implementation.

Thank you for your attention.