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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF  
THE THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE  
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Skopje, 1 December 2023

Mr. Chairperson-in-Office,  
Madam Secretary General,  
Colleagues,

Allow me to make a few comments on the outcome of the Skopje discussions.

At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office of North Macedonia and to Minister Bujar Osmani personally and his team for the efficient organization of this key annual OSCE event and for the hospitality provided. We consider the exchange of opinions that took place in the current extremely difficult circumstances to have been very useful, despite the directly opposing views and assessments on the part of a number of participating States, which was to be expected. We will not make a tragedy out of it. We have always emphasized that dialogue is useful in any situation – that is what our Organization was created for.

One of the premises on which the Helsinki process was conceived and developed is the shared conviction that the basis for security on the European continent is reciprocal respect for the interests of States, the sovereign equality of States and the collective search for responses to emerging challenges to overall stability. The OSCE has been and remains an integral part of the identity of a greater Europe. This is reflected in the very name of our Organization.

Unfortunately, over the past decades, thanks to the efforts of the Western alliance countries, the OSCE has significantly lost its potential and is going through an acute identity crisis. I am sure that each of the States represented here would like to regard the Organization as a useful tool for the pursuit of its interests. That is only right. But only if the interests of others are taken into account. Such a balance must underpin the OSCE's future action for the benefit of all participating States without exception.

A new, fairer and more democratic world order is being formed before our eyes. New centres of economic, cultural and civilizational influence are rapidly gaining traction. Common tasks in all security dimensions remain before us in the OSCE area. The threats of terrorism, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings have not disappeared. There is still work to be done in the economic and environmental dimension. A great many problems remain in the area of linguistic, educational and religious rights and freedoms. We are ready to work together if the OSCE can return to the path of open and honest dialogue, overcome the propensity for confrontation and the pursuit of narrow group interests, and demonstrate its

readiness for co-operation on an equal basis with unconditional respect for the fundamental rule of consensus.

We trust that Malta, as the holder of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office in 2024, will work in strict compliance with the existing mandate and will be able to restore the culture of diplomatic dialogue and intensive consultations. We are confident that the distinguished Secretary General, Helga Schmid, will provide the Maltese Chairmanship with all the necessary support.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of today's closing session of the Ministerial Council.

Thank you for your attention.