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**STATEMENT BY
THE HEAD OF DELEGATION, MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE OSCE, AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE TWENTY-NINTH
MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Łódź, 2 December 2022

Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and gentlemen,

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

First of all, we are extremely disappointed with the manner and working methods of the Polish Chairmanship. We regret that Poland has been unable to overcome its internal complexes and to rise above historical grievances in the interests of strengthening the collective foundations of our Organization's work. The institution of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office has suffered serious reputational damage. Furthermore, the current Ministerial Council meeting has been characterized by extremely confrontational and aggressive behaviour displayed by a great number of participating States, which is contrary to the very nature of our Organization. The next country to take the helm of the OSCE, North Macedonia, will need a long time to clean up this difficult "legacy". We trust that the authorities in Skopje will be aided by a sense of decency, professionalism and a focus on strengthening the tools of multilateral diplomacy.

At the same time, we should like to recall that the effectiveness of any international entity depends on how relevant it is to its participants. This applies in full measure to the OSCE. Each of the States present here must regard the Organization as a useful tool for the pursuit of its own interests while taking into account the interests of others. This balance must underpin the OSCE's future action for the benefit of all participating States without exception.

Despite the current challenges, we believe that the OSCE has a future. The Organization is still relevant as a platform for peer-to-peer and mutually respectful dialogue and for co-operation. When the Russophobic hysteria passes, we will be ready to restore the work of the OSCE together. But this will have to be done on a new footing, as the traditional approaches have been thoroughly discredited.

The discriminatory attitude towards Russia and other States "east of Vienna" should be abandoned. There are no "whipping boys" here; there is no place for preaching and lecturing. Let us rekindle the culture of mutually respectful professional dialogue. It is up to the joint efforts of States with equal rights to revive the "spirit of Helsinki". To this end, all the leaders of our countries who signed the documents of the OSCE summits in Istanbul (1999) and Astana (2010) should in practice demonstrate their readiness to be guided by the principle of equal and indivisible security enshrined in them. It is important to reaffirm the willingness to

unequivocally honour the commitment not to strengthen one's own security at the expense of the security of others.

Work must be done on the basis of a balance of interests to elaborate specific agreements in the field of "hard" security in the Euro-Atlantic area and to revive the regime of conventional arms control in Europe and confidence- and security-building measures. There is only one acceptable outcome: long-term, legally binding security guarantees for all OSCE participating States.

The principles of consensus and non-intervention in the internal affairs of another participating State are in dire need of reaffirmation. A culture of compromise and the rejection of double standards must be spelled out in OSCE documents. The primacy of the decision-making bodies needs to be enshrined.

It is necessary to preserve the common pan-European space "from Vancouver to Vladivostok" and not to allow its fragmentation and the separation of the western part of the continent from the eastern part.

We are aware of the widespread perception that, with the current extreme level of confrontation, any major ambitious projects are now doomed. We see no reason to agree with this. I am certain that we have to seek agreement. It is the axiom of diplomacy. The Organization cannot be in perpetual "standby mode" – as it is now. Nor can it justify its continued existence with the task of "punishing and containing" Russia. This is a road to nowhere.

We are convinced that it will definitely not be possible to replace the OSCE with a structure similar in terms of composition and competence. If there is no OSCE, its functions will be partially taken over by another format seeking to occupy an independent "niche" in building a bridge between the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian areas. Do we want such a fate for our Organization? Everything depends on us.

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

Thank you for your attention.