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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1342nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 October 2021

**On democracy and democratic elections in the OSCE area**

Madam Chairperson,

Given that my country was mentioned, I should like to exercise the right of reply.

We have already commented at the Permanent Council on a number of occasions on subjects relating to the elections to the State Duma. We regret that the instigators of such discussions consistently choose to ignore our arguments. Incidentally, they themselves cannot in any way be regarded as shining examples of democracy where human rights are concerned.

We are disappointed by the refusal of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to monitor the elections in Russia. The Russian authorities' demands to limit the size of all foreign observation missions were driven by epidemiological safety considerations during the pandemic. The ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly could have followed the example of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which deployed pared-down missions to Russia. Instead, however, they arbitrarily refused to monitor the elections under politicized pretexts. Their justifications for this are not convincing and stem from the lack of clear consensus-based rules for the establishment and work of OSCE monitoring missions, the need for which we bring up repeatedly. The only obligation currently agreed upon is to invite foreign observers to the elections in accordance with paragraph 8 of the CSCE Copenhagen Document of 1990, and this has been rigorously implemented by Russia.

In any case, it is not for the United States of America to lecture the OSCE participating States on the subject. The United States Government has consistently violated this basic commitment concerning democratic elections, along with many other commitments. In 2020, the ODIHR observers were denied access to polling stations in 18 states, while international election observation is fully enshrined in legislation only in five states and in the District of Columbia. In the other states, it is left to the discretion of the local authorities, which – judging by the remarks made by a number of governors – are not well disposed towards such monitoring. The ODIHR too has been pointing out the need for a universal approach to be developed at the federal level for granting observers access to polling stations; this is also noted in its current final report. This is to say nothing of the ODIHR's criticism of the very foundations of the electoral process – the Electoral College system, which is not in accordance with international good practice as it does not

fulfil the principle of equality of the vote. This includes comments on the disenfranchisement of millions of US citizens, systemic racism, the unsatisfactory media situation and so on.

Do you want to promote democracy? Then do so not by levelling indiscriminate criticism, but by leading by your own positive example. You still have work to do in this regard, especially on yourselves.

Thank you for your attention.