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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1255th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 January 2020

**In response to the address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,
Mr. George Tsereteli**

Mr. President,

We have listened attentively to your address and should like to make a few comments about key aspects of the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA).

The Assembly's most urgent task remains that of improving its relevance as a platform for mutually respectful and constructive dialogue on the most pressing security and co-operation issues across the entire OSCE area. This task requires the abandonment of deliberately confrontational approaches. It is high time to put an end to the vicious practice of using the Assembly to make unfounded accusations and put forward biased resolutions against individual countries.

A substantial improvement in the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE PA would contribute to resolving these long-standing problems. First, it is necessary to ensure the truly democratic nature of the consideration and approval of Assembly documents by a majority of its members with a reliable procedure for counting votes and determining the quorum. In Bratislava in December last year, the Sub-Committee on Rules of Procedure and Working Practices discussed in a constructive manner possible changes to the rules. It is good that the proposals of the Sub-Committee on amendments to the Rules of Procedure will, as you said, be considered by all delegations and submitted for approval by the Standing Committee of the OSCE PA at the winter meeting in Vienna.

This year, the OSCE PA should devote special attention to the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, during which the anti-Hitler coalition, with the decisive role of the Soviet Union, freed Europe from Nazism. Today, collective efforts are needed against the glorification of Nazi criminals and their accomplices. Vandalism of monuments to soldiers and commanders of the Red Army, who gave their lives in the fight against this evil, is inexcusable. Attempts to falsify the history of this most terrible world war are unacceptable.

We hope that the Assembly will continue to focus on the pressing task of combating terrorism. The Russian delegation has proposed that Nikolay Ryzhak, a deputy of the State Duma, be included in the

OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism. We are convinced that his rich experience will contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The Assembly's agenda should include relevant topics such as combating illegal migration, trafficking in human beings and corruption. There is a need to address the issues of economic connectivity and the alignment of integration processes in the OSCE area in order to form a Greater Eurasian Partnership, and to realize the initiative to hold a pilot pan-European parliamentary forum to discuss these topics.

Against the backdrop of recent events in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, the OSCE PA's consolidated position in support of de-escalation of tensions in the region is desperately needed, as confirmed by the autumn meeting of the Assembly in Marrakech. We support the expansion of co-operation with the OSCE Mediterranean Partners in line with the declaration adopted at the Ministerial Council in Milan in 2018.

We call on the Assembly to strengthen its efforts to combat Christianophobia and Islamophobia and preserve traditional and family values. It is important to respond in a timely manner to violations of linguistic, educational and religious rights.

A number of elections will be held in the OSCE area in 2020. We hope that the Assembly will contribute to the observation of the electoral processes, without politicization and double standards.

Mr. Tsereteli,

The OSCE PA could finally play a constructive role in the settlement of the crisis in Ukraine. This cannot be done without adopting an impartial standpoint based on an objective assessment of what is happening in the east of the country. Why should the representatives of the Assembly not visit certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions? A balanced and impartial approach is also necessary with regard to other conflict situations in the OSCE area.

In conclusion, we should like to welcome the appointment of distinguished Ambassador Miodrag Pančeski as Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the Vienna office of the Assembly and wish him success.

Thank you for your attention.