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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1494th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 October 2024

**In response to the report by the
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Madam Chairperson,

We welcome Ambassador Bakyt Dzhusupov, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, to the Permanent Council. We have carefully read the report on his activities during the reporting period and on his plans for work in the future and should like to make the following comments.

We appreciate the efforts of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities to support political dialogue and co-operation in the economic and environmental dimension, which has always been of a less politicized nature and was once capable of playing a unifying role. We take particular note of the Office's contribution to the events of the Economic and Environmental Forum, the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting and the thematic meetings of the Economic and Environmental Committee.

Among our priorities in the second "basket" is the need to step up the Office's work in promoting digital technologies, above all in the public services sector. Good governance and the fight against corruption and money laundering remain a focus. It is very relevant today to consider the issues faced by a number of countries in the process of accelerated energy transition. Studying the experience gained would help to reduce the risks associated with the transition and prevent mistakes from being repeated.

We support the efforts and projects aimed at strengthening trade and transport connectivity, simplifying customs and border procedures and promoting transport corridors in the interests of developing international economic co-operation, including those that help to link integration processes on the Eurasian continent.

In that connection, we call upon the Economic and Environmental Co-ordinator to take a closer look at the experience of the Eurasian Economic Union, where co-operation takes place on an equitable, mutually beneficial and mutually respectful basis.

We support the Office's efforts to strengthen co-operation with relevant international organizations. That being said, we recall that the activities of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Co-ordinator should be informed by the participating States' needs and avoid duplicating the work of other multilateral structures. This also applies to co-operation with other parts of the Organization, including field operations. It is important to take into account their specific characteristics and the need to act in order to increase the effectiveness of the OSCE, and to be results-oriented.

We should like to see greater transparency in the Office's work. We would be grateful for the opportunity to receive information on a regular basis, for example during the thematic meetings of the Economic and Environmental Committee, on current work – events organized by the Office, contacts with international organizations, and participation in and presentations at international forums and conferences. We always look forward to your proactive participation in Economic and Environmental Committee meetings.

We insist on the need to correct the bias in the Office's activities in recent years in favour of the priority implementation of extrabudgetary projects, often to the detriment of ongoing work. In this connection, we draw attention to the importance of fulfilling the obligation to post "public" presentations by experts invited to participate in the Economic and Environmental Forum on the website dedicated to the Forum. So far we have seen a complete absence of such presentations.

We regard as unacceptable and counterproductive the attempts by a group of States to undermine the constructive dialogue that has begun to emerge and to subordinate the work of the second "basket", as well as that of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, to the situation in Ukraine. Such actions are contrary to the basic principle of the OSCE's work built on collective efforts and consensus and are leading to a deepening split in our Organization.

There are also questions regarding the work being carried out by the Office within the framework of the OSCE Climate and Security Fund Repository Programme. We believe it is necessary to strictly follow the letter of the Stockholm Ministerial Council decision on climate change, in particular the provisions on the OSCE's complementary function in the global climate action process, where the United Nations plays a central role, and on the advisability of focusing on strengthening co-operation among the OSCE participating States in tackling and minimizing the negative consequences of climate change and adapting to them. Trying to replace practical work on climate change issues with the steamrolling through of something that is not in the decision, namely a direct link between climate change and security, is totally unacceptable.

We once again stress that, in its activities, the Office should adhere strictly to its existing mandate and the agreed language. Strict adherence to the mandate is also critical in terms of the funding and staffing of the Office in the context of the ongoing discussions on the budget.

The OSCE is facing challenging times. Illegal unilateral Western sanctions have effectively devalued the economic and environmental "basket". This also applies in full measure to the prospects for holding the 32nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum next year. Our position in this regard will take into account Czechia's actions in refusing to issue visas to all the representatives of our delegation arriving from Russia, which prevented them from taking part in the Forum's Concluding Meeting in Prague.

Thank you for your attention.