

PC.DEL/203/16
19 February 2016

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1090th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 February 2016

**In response to the report by the
Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are delighted to welcome Ambassador Peter Burkhard to the meeting of the Permanent Council. Thank you for the informative report.

We share the views on the stable internal situation in the country and the consistent efforts by the Serbian Government to carry out reforms in line with its national priorities. We take note of the Serbian Government's responsible approach to strengthening regional ties with neighbouring countries. We are confident that the Government's policy of developing multifaceted co-operation in the Balkans and its aspiration, as seen in practice, to move on from the long-standing conflicts will help to increase stability and security throughout the region.

We agree with the glowing reports on the outcome of the work of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, which deserves to be a benchmark for the Organization's other field missions in the region. The example set by the Serbian mission once again demonstrates that the OSCE's assistance can be effective only if it is in strict compliance with national needs and the host authorities are genuinely interested in it.

We take note of the Mission's contribution to helping carry out police reforms, enhancing the capacity of law enforcement bodies to fight organized crime and corruption and improving the penitentiary and criminal justice systems. At a time when we are far from finding a solution to the problems of the proliferation of transborder crime and the rising threat of terrorism and drugs across the region, it is becoming increasingly important to boost national capabilities for enforcing law and order. We trust that the OSCE missions in the Balkans will continue co-ordinated efforts to strengthen regional co-operation in these areas.

We appreciate the Mission's work in providing expert support in promotion of: legislative and judicial reforms being undertaken by the Serbian Government, democratization efforts, guarantees of media freedom and the strengthening of the system of

local self-government. It is gratifying that the OSCE Mission plans to work closely with the authorities to provide them with assistance in these areas, under the host country's supervision.

With respect to the protection of the rights of national minorities, the collaboration between the authorities and the Mission has been fruitful. We believe that it is crucial for the Serbian Government to be open to co-operation on the matter with neighbouring countries in addition to attempts to improve legislation domestically. We are in favour of the Serbian Government's efforts to safeguard the rights and opportunities of ethnic minorities in the south and south-west of the country. We agree that the resettlement of refugees and the problem of internally displaced persons are matters which demand our constant attention. We hope that significant progress will be made in this regard already during the current year.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Ambassador Peter Burkhard and his closely co-ordinated team further success in their important work.

Thank you for your attention.