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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1534th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 September 2025

On the presentation of the priorities of the 2026 Swiss OSCE Chairmanship

Minister,

We have listened with interest to your address outlining the priorities of the Swiss Chairmanship in 2026. At the outset, it must be said that our impression of Switzerland's preparations for the Chairmanship is ambivalent for now.

You have indicated that you plan to work on preserving the Organization as a broad platform for diplomatic engagement and to direct the OSCE's efforts towards dialogue, trust and security. But, at the same time, you consider February 2022 alone as the starting point of the current crisis. In other words, you are broadcasting the position of those who deliberately hush up the long-term processes set in motion by the West, processes that have led to the erosion of the foundations of European security. I would remind you that by no means did these processes begin in 2022, the year in which Russia was compelled to take the difficult decision to defend itself against large-scale threats from the territory of Ukraine by launching a special military operation. Nor did they begin in 2014, when a number of Western countries, in violation of the Helsinki principles, sponsored a coup in Kyiv and set about building a nationalist State there as the antipode of Russia and all things Russian. It was NATO's aggression against the former Yugoslavia that triggered a series of dangerous processes that undermined the OSCE's credibility and capacity to respond appropriately to conflicts.

The OSCE has continued to deteriorate together with European security. We are witnessing a systemic crisis, brought about by a systematic departure from the fundamental principles of the Organization, in which virtually no trace of security nor co-operation nor diplomacy is left. The basic documents, which were agreed upon at the highest level and intended to guide the OSCE's work and create the prospects for it, have been consigned to oblivion. I am referring primarily to the Charter for European Security (1999) and the Astana declaration (2010), in which all States signed up to the principle of indivisible security and committed themselves to working together on the concept of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. The path chosen by a number of Chairmanships, namely that of promoting the notorious "rules-based order" instead of the outlines agreed upon by all the participating States for indivisible security in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area, has led the Organization down a blind alley.

These destructive exercises, which culminated during the Polish Chairmanship in 2022, are now being repeated by Finland. The OSCE will simply not survive the continuation of such a policy.

There is no point in talking about the Organization's "added value" with regard to Ukraine now – it is necessary to eliminate the root causes of the conflict and create conditions for de-escalation and substantive dialogue on the parameters of a sustainable peace settlement taking into account the legitimate interests of all parties, including Russia. We warn against repeating the mistakes of previous Chairmanships, which covered up for the Kyiv regime and demonstratively turned a blind eye to its crimes. To make out that "freedom and democracy are flourishing" in Ukraine today and that civilian casualties caused by weapons being supplied to that country by NATO States simply do not exist is an act of self-deception and deception of the international community.

Alas, before even taking up the Chairmanship, your country, Minister, joined the politicized statement by the OSCE Troika on Ukraine of 29 August, a statement that is steeped in Russophobia. This is an extremely worrying sign. We are wondering to what extent will Switzerland, once it is at the helm of the OSCE, be able to resist the pressure of EU and NATO member countries seeking to subvert the entire agenda? Further "Ukrainization" of the programme of activities, its one-sided politicization and focus on one conflict to the detriment of other aspects of security are a direct route to oblivion for the OSCE.

Minister,

Our Organization still has the potential for engagement that unifies. Making proper use of this potential will be a factor in maintaining the OSCE's relevance.

We are convinced of the need to resume joint work in countering a range of transnational threats, especially combating the international terrorist threat in all its manifestations. We call for the fight against drug trafficking to be taken very seriously. We are prepared to continue seeking common ground on the security of information and communication technologies. It is important next year to hold the traditional high-level conferences on counter-terrorism, anti-drug efforts and cybersecurity, along with the expert meetings on border security and police co-operation. There is no good reason for the absence, over the past few years, of these once consensus-based forums from the Organization's programme of work. We underscore the need to hold the Annual Security Review Conference in line with the format approved through an OSCE Ministerial Council decision adopted in Porto in 2002.

There is a need for serious restructuring of the work in the economic and environmental dimension, where, as a matter of fact, it is worth recalling the numerous promising subject-specific topics envisaged in the founding documents of the CSCE/OSCE. These include trade-related aspects, industrial co-operation, harmonization of standards, science, medicine, new technologies – the list is huge. And what does our Organization actually do in all of these? Nothing. Instead of partnership, there was literally a barrage of illegitimate EU sanctions crashing down on the tools for reviving the areas of economic co-operation set out in the Helsinki Final Act and the Bonn Document of 1990.

We would remind you of the need to re-establish a consensus-based "package approach" to the human dimension agenda. Since the beginning of the year, the Finnish Chairmanship has not held a single round of consultations with all the participating States on thematic work under the "third basket", nor on the issue of relocating OSCE human dimension events and the headquarters of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights outside Poland, as Russia is urging. It has to be said that the work of the "third basket" is completely paralysed. Will Switzerland be able to get it back on a constructive track?

We note with regret that other regional issues are stagnating as a result of the unjustified shift of focus towards Ukraine. A consequence of this approach was the dissolution of the institutions of the Minsk Conference. The common perception today is that they were ineffectual and not up to the task. Let me remind you that the spurious pretext for suspending contacts between the French and US Co-chairs of the Minsk Group and their Russian counterpart in 2022 was the special military operation.

In the absence of dialogue between the mediators, these bodies could not fully perform their functions, which led to their marginalization. As a result, despite its vast experience, the OSCE found itself on the sidelines of Armenian-Azerbaijani normalization.

Other regional issues, above all, a Transnistrian settlement and the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also risk becoming the next casualties of this short-sighted approach. For several years, the Russian Federation has been fighting for the resumption of the work of the “5+2” negotiation format, in which the OSCE acts as a mediator. We regard any effort to replace the “5+2” format with alternative multilateral and bilateral mechanisms as aimed at undermining the role of the Organization in the Transnistrian settlement process. As regards the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we note attempts to use the OSCE field operation in that country as an instrument for exerting political pressure on the authorities in Banja Luka.

We can see some results of the activities of the OSCE’s field operations in Central Asia. At the same time, we draw the incoming Chairmanship’s attention to the need to avoid politicization and bias during the implementation of projects in the region. In organizing the work of the field “presences”, the priorities and needs of the host States should be the primary focus, rather than carrying out the orders of certain groups of countries or alliances that, for the most part, use the OSCE’s extrabudgetary tools to promote their political and economic agenda.

We call upon the incoming Chairmanship to take the experience of its predecessors into account as much as possible when formulating proposals on the OSCE Unified Budget for 2026. Significant political obstacles to the reaching of consensus have recently been removed, but disagreements over figures remain. It is important not to make the mistake of trying to ignore the principled approaches of participating States on this issue, including Russia’s demands regarding the expenditures of the human dimension institutions. These attempts are leading the budget discussions nowhere.

We are convinced that the problems that have accumulated at the OSCE cannot be solved within the framework of an outdated budgeting paradigm by simply increasing costs in line with inflation. Urgent and vigorous measures are needed to reform administrative and budgetary policies and practices, based on a clear understanding of the new economic realities. We expect the esteemed Secretary General to submit to the Permanent Council proposals that will reconcile the resource needs of all executive structures with the financial capacity of the participating States. That is precisely what is now happening in the United Nations system, whose example should serve as benchmark.

To conclude, we recall the conditions under which Switzerland was confirmed as Chairmanship-in-Office. We trust that the Swiss authorities will make a meaningful effort to salvage the Organization’s ability to perform, a meaningful effort to restore a culture of professional, dialogue-oriented co-operation and to hold consultations with all participating States on the preparation of key events in the OSCE’s annual cycle. We caution against discrimination targeting representatives of participating States when attending events organized by the OSCE – ensuring timely, unhindered access should not be considered a privilege. We expect full compliance with the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE, with the mandate of the Chairmanship-in-Office approved at the 2002 Ministerial Council meeting in Porto and with Permanent Council Decision No. 485 of 28 June 2002 on public statements.

Minister,

Switzerland has experience in chairing the OSCE. Your country's "tour of duty" in 1996 and 2014 demonstrated Switzerland's ability to maintain a balance and operate under the most difficult circumstances. In 1996, important work was carried out in preparation for the Lisbon Summit. In 2014, the OSCE undertook de-escalation efforts in Ukraine, albeit unsuccessfully. And what will Switzerland be able to offer in 2026? We have a number of simple questions, on the basis of the answers to them we will judge how ready your country is for this responsible role.

Will Switzerland have the necessary resolve to build up balanced and professional work at the OSCE? Will you be able to structure the discussion of any political issues at the Permanent Council in such a way that there are equal opportunities for all participating States? Or will you go along with the Western alliance countries, continuing the practice they have imposed of introducing anti-Russian agenda items on Ukraine? With regard to OSCE events, especially the 2026 Ministerial Council meeting in Lugano, will you ensure equal and unhindered access for all participating States' delegations?

We call upon the Swiss Chairmanship to begin the process of returning the OSCE to its intended purpose as a platform for honest dialogue and co-operation, rather than an arena for confrontation. Let us hope that Switzerland is up to this task.

Thank you for your attention.