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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1520th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 May 2025

In response to the report by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the distinguished OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, Ambassador Antti Karttunen, and thank him for his report on the field operation's project activities. We are also grateful for the presentation, which you made during the informal meeting on 14 May, about a project being implemented in Uzbekistan with the field operation's support.

We trust that the Project Co-ordinator's Office will continue to work strictly in accordance with its mandate, in close co-operation with the host country authorities, including on the basis of the agreed Roadmap for 2025–2026, despite the destructive activities of the European Union in the Central Asia region.

We note the close co-operation of the Project Co-ordinator's Office with key ministries and agencies, and with educational institutions and public bodies in the host country. We take it that project activities, especially extrabudgetary ones, are geared towards the host country's needs.

On the whole, we agree with the priorities for the work of the Project Co-ordinator's Office in all three dimensions.

We welcome the field operation's work in combating terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking and organized crime. Despite the positive trend in the development of Uzbekistan's trade and economic relations with the new authorities in Afghanistan, the risks of growing cross-border threats remain high. We assume that this topic will continue to feature among the key areas of the Project Co-ordinator's work.

We note the Office's efforts with respect to information security and countering cybercrime, and the active co-operation by the field operation with regional and international bodies operating in Uzbekistan.

We would ask you to keep in mind the expertise of Russian specialists in the OSCE's first dimension. In particular, the training courses organized by the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs for Central Asian specialists have proved to be excellent. We are keen to continue this practice.

The issue of combating money laundering and corruption, along with the shadow economy, remains as relevant as ever. We welcome the work of the Project Co-ordinator's Office in monitoring the heavy metal and radioactive contamination of the Syr Darya River, along with biodiversity in the South Aral region.

As can be seen from your report, the project being implemented by the Office for several years now aimed at promoting the development of women's business in Uzbekistan is yielding positive results. We also note the efforts by the Project Co-ordinator's Office in its work with young people, including support for aspiring entrepreneurs in the regions.

In the third dimension, we highlight the work on projects to combat trafficking in human beings, including with the involvement of Uzbekistan's scientific and educational community.

At the same time, we draw attention to the need for a balanced approach to the issue of human rights, which requires consideration of Uzbekistan's national traditions and domestic political characteristics.

Russia and Uzbekistan are bound together by close historical ties. Bilateral co-operation is currently being activated on a wide front. Uzbekistan is a strategic partner and reliable ally of Russia in Central Asia. We value the Uzbek Government's balanced approach to issues on the international and regional agenda and look forward to further effective co-operation with Uzbekistan at the OSCE.

We hope that the efforts of the Project Co-ordinator's Office will continue to usefully complement the considerable work that the authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan are carrying out bilaterally with the Russian Federation, and also through the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

We understand the difficulties resulting from the failure to agree on the OSCE budget. At the same time, we call for continued strict adherence to the field operation's mandate, and avoidance of the politicization of its work, along with any bias, including in the implementation of extrabudgetary projects. We would also ask that only consensus-based terminology be used and would point out that the "whole-of-society approach" mentioned on page five of your report is not an example of such terminology.

In closing, we should like to wish Ambassador Karttunen and the Office's staff good health and continued success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.