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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1092nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 March 2016

On freedom of expression in Turkey

Mr. Chairperson,

We share the serious concerns expressed by colleagues regarding the question of freedom of expression and the media in Turkey.

Quite recently, the Turkish leadership expressed its disagreement with the decision by its constitutional court to release the editors of the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* Can Dündar and Erdem Gül. Disregard for a court ruling, and one by such a high instance, is an extremely worrying sign. This is taking place against the background of an evolving campaign against a number of opposition media in Turkey. In particular, there is the matter of the persecution and appointment of a panel of trustees to manage the newspaper *Zaman* and Cihan news agency belonging to the Feza media holding company. Human rights campaigners are worried that the trustees appointed by the State are being used merely to shut down or interfere with reporting by media critical of the Government. A number of media outlets that were put into trusteeship earlier (Bugün TV and Kanaltürk in October 2015) were recently declared bankrupt.

The protest demonstration against the repression of the publication organized a few days ago in Istanbul at the *Zaman* headquarters was harshly suppressed by the law enforcement authorities, who used tear gas against the demonstrators.

It is well known that the Turkish Journalists' Association has condemned the pressure exerted by the authorities on opposition media, calling such actions a new form of censorship.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, has called on the Turkish authorities to adopt urgent measures to ensure observance of freedom of expression guaranteed by the country's constitution.

We also call on Turkey to comply with OSCE commitments on freedom of expression and of the media and to desist from the repression of journalists.

Thank you for your attention.