

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1101st MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 May 2016

**On the referendum in Tajikistan**

Mr. Chairperson,

We congratulate the Tajik people on the successful referendum on amendments to the national Constitution held on 22 May. The turnout was impressive: 92 per cent of the registered voters. In our opinion, this figure demonstrates the great sense of responsibility of the citizens regarding the future of their country.

The proposed amendments to the Basic Law of Tajikistan were supported by a majority of those who went to the polls (94.5 per cent). As is well known, before being put to a national referendum, they were approved by the Lower House of Parliament and presented to the Constitutional Court (in January). Given the large number of modifications to the Constitution approved by the citizens of Tajikistan – 41 in all – the amendments may be regarded as comprehensive. We therefore believe that it would be unfair to focus merely on a few of them.

The referendum was monitored by invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan and included observer missions from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). They were provided with detailed information about the planned changes to the Constitution, and the necessary conditions were in place for them to observe the progress in the preparation and conduct of the vote. Representatives of the missions visited polling stations in various communities within the country.

According to the head of the CIS observer mission, the referendum took place in a free and open atmosphere and the people were able to express their will freely.

For its part, the SCO observer mission stated that the referendum was held in compliance with the Constitutional Law on Referendums in the Republic of Tajikistan and the international commitments undertaken by the State. The people were able to express their will openly, freely and lawfully.

Under these circumstances, the decision by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights not to send observers to monitor the referendum is regrettable. Although this decision had no impact whatsoever on the outcome of the referendum or its legitimacy, it deprives the Office itself of any moral basis for expressing an opinion about it.

Thank you for your attention.