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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1174th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1 February 2017

**Regarding the signing of an executive order in the United States of America
to keep the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay open**

Mr. Chairperson,

We discussed yet again at the Permanent Council meeting on 18 January the continued existence of the notorious detention facility at Guantánamo. The distinguished United States representative promised to give us clarifications later.

Instead, we have received a different kind of response in the form of news that has shocked the international community – the President of the United States of America Donald Trump has decided to end the programme to close the detention facility.

We recall that the United States Government made repeated promises to close the detention facility at Guantánamo, where 41 people are still held today. What is more, most of these people are being held without trial, investigation or access to justice. In total, more than 700 people have passed through these cells.

The process of closing the prison has been terribly protracted, despite being one of Barack Obama's main promises during his election campaign in 2008. The international community had high hopes for this promise, but these hopes, it seems, have been in vain.

The existence of a facility like the prison at Guantánamo is an example of the United States of America's flagrant disregard for its international human rights commitments. In her statement of 11 January on this matter, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir stressed that "indefinite detention without charge or trial constitutes cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment." I also recall that in 2015, following a series of visits to the United States and a visit to the detention facility at Guantánamo, the ODIHR published a voluminous report on the situation of prisoners held at the Guantánamo facility, in which it stated the need for the prison's rapid closure.

We are worried too that the number of prisoners at Guantánamo could increase. Reports suggest that the executive order signed by Donald Trump envisage that the United States could send new detainees to the US naval base at Guantánamo Bay if this is in the country's lawful security interests. At the same time, those guilty of forced abductions, torture and other forms of abuse of prisoners over the past years of the facility's work have still not been brought to justice.

Numerous human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch, have already responded critically to the decision to keep the facility at Guantánamo open.

We call on the United States to respect its international human rights commitments and on the ODIHR to make public its view on the current situation. For our part, we will continue to follow developments closely.

Thank you for your attention.