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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1112th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 September 2016

**On the Levada Center**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have explained the fundamentals of the Russian legislation regulating the activities of non-profit organizations several times. We have called more than once for a close examination of the relevant statements, in particular from the following dates: 12 November 2015 and 18 February, 17 March, 2 June and 7 July 2016. Despite the detailed clarifications, our colleagues harp on the same arguments with alarming regularity. They call for the reversal of decisions that were adopted in accordance with the legislation and even for a review of their provisions, which by the way are not incompatible with international law. This approach leads nowhere.

It bears repeating that the cause for concern lies elsewhere. The United States of America and the European Union actually supply the bulk of the funding for several Russian non-governmental organizations, whose activities are far from always in keeping with their stated objectives. Regulating their work is one of the requirements for maintaining the sovereignty of the State. Meanwhile, our Western colleagues are for some reason not condemning the closure in several OSCE countries of television channels on the pretext of a threat to national security.

And now with regard to the Levada Center or Yuri Levada Analytical Center, which has indeed been included in the register of non-profit organizations operating as foreign agents by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation. I should like to point out that conducting and publishing sociological research and polls on political issues has a direct impact on shaping public opinion and can quite logically be categorized as political activity. This is exactly what the Levada Center does, funded in particular by Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

I should like to stress that this does not represent any kind of obstacle to the continuation of the Levada Center's work. Apart from that, the organization has the opportunity to appeal against a decision in accordance with established procedure.

Incidentally, when United States Department of State Deputy Spokesman Mr. Mark Toner commented on this subject at a press briefing on 6 September, journalists drew his attention to the similarities between the Russian legislation and the American Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). Mr. Toner replied that the United States does not object to Russian legislation in and of itself, but only to its application. Therefore our American colleagues should get things straight amongst themselves before they level accusations at us.

Thank you for your attention.