

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1102nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 June 2016

On International Children's Day

Mr. Chairperson,

Yesterday, on 1 June, we observed the International Day for Protection of Children (International Children's Day), which was established by the Women's International Democratic Federation at its congress in Paris in 1949. This date serves as a reminder of the need to observe children's rights to life, health and education, rest and leisure, protection against physical, sexual and psychological violence, and against exploitation of child labour, and so on.

Children's rights in Russia are protected by a number of special laws. The National Children's Action Strategy for 2012 to 2017 is being implemented to ensure that international standards regarding the rights of the child are being met. The comprehensive State programme, "Social Support for Citizens for 2013 to 2020", was approved in 2012. Its tasks include reducing poverty in families with children, reducing family hardship, homelessness, neglect and social orphanhood of minors, ensuring holidays and health care measures for children, including those facing hardship, and raising the level of social services for children with disabilities. The State Family Policy Concept to 2025 was approved in 2014.

Particular attention is paid to material incentives to encourage fostering and support for foster families. As a result, the number of orphans and the number of parents deprived of their parental rights have fallen significantly in recent years, while the number of missing children has halved over the past five years.

A set of measures is being implemented to improve the living conditions of large families, focusing on the development of a network of preschool educational facilities. The programme to provide so-called maternal capital paid out for the second child and subsequent children has been extended.

I should like to underscore that we do not conceal the problems in our country and are working to resolve them.

At the same time, we cannot remain indifferent to what is happening to children throughout the OSCE area. Alarming information about countless violations in this area and threats to the life, safety, health and moral development of children requires the closest attention.

Each country has its difficulties and successes in child protection. We all appear to be in agreement that this problem should occupy a more prominent place in the OSCE's work. However, quite the opposite is happening in practice. Year after year, the same set of topics are prioritized, while child protection remains in the background. I should like to remind you that in his statement to the Permanent Council on 14 April 2016, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Mr. Michael Georg Link, emphasized that the topic of children remains among those that are neglected in the OSCE.

We firmly believe that this picture needs to change dramatically. The statement here a week ago by the Estonian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers that it intended to make child protection one of its priorities sets a good example.

As regards the OSCE, we suggest the organization at last of a proper event to thoroughly analyse the situation and challenges regarding children's rights, to review the OSCE commitments in this area and exchange best practices with a view to drafting a Ministerial Council decision on this subject. We call on the current German Chairmanship and the future Austrian Chairmanship to take account of this in their work.

Thank you for your attention.