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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1132nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 February 2017

On the changes to Russian legislation regarding domestic violence

Mr. Chairperson,

We have heard many things at the meetings of the Permanent Council, but this is the first time that we are faced with the fact that the United States of America and a number of our other partners are concerned not about the tightening, but about the softening of legislation in another country. It has long been known that material presented in the statements of Western representatives is characterized by the deliberate use of one-sided facts to support their own agenda. It is also noteworthy that, by incriminating the Russian media in their propaganda, our US colleagues willingly use their assessments to support their own assertions, as they have done today by citing RIA Novosti.

Violence against women and girls clearly deserves severe punishment wherever it occurs. The statistics quoted are truly depressing. But no one is denying that this is a problem in Russia, as it is all over the world. Domestic violence also affects boys and often men. Each State should have the right to choose its own measures to combat the phenomenon, guided by international practice and personal experience. The presented assessments are therefore flawed in that there is no information on the effect of the application of any form of penalty on the situation in this area.

In their comments on the amendments adopted by the State Duma, which, incidentally, have not yet become law, colleagues have kept silent about very important aspects. These are that systematic violence or violence that causes even slight physical harm to health has been and remains a criminal offence. Also remaining in the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation is the provision that violence committed against pregnant women, minors or persons known to be in a state of helplessness, is an aggravating circumstance.

The aim of the new legislative initiative is, first and foremost, to promote compliance with the principle of proportional justice. The established mitigation helps to prevent abuse in this area, where a family member can be held criminally liable for attempting to push or slap an interlocutor during a quarrel. Only a single action that does not cause bodily harm has been excluded from criminal prosecution. This is nevertheless recognized as a serious

administrative offence for which the corresponding liability is established – detention, punitive work or a fine.

Thank you for your attention.