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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1118th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 November 2016

**On the prohibition on entry to the United States of America for the  
President of the World Chess Federation, Mr. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov**

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the prohibition on entry to the United States of America of the President of the World Chess Federation (FIDE), Mr. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov.

The World Chess Championship Match is taking place in New York from 11 to 30 November. The tournament is being organized by FIDE. At the Federation's initiative, to coincide with the event, this year was proclaimed the Year of Chess in the United States of America, and in New York alone over 30 major chess meetings have been held. Nor is it a coincidence that New York was selected as the venue for this Match. FIDE made this decision in tribute to the memory of the outstanding US chess grandmaster Bobby Fischer, who grew up in New York.

But now that all of the plans and arrangements have been made, the US authorities are refusing to allow the FIDE President to enter the country. The official reason is that sanctions have been imposed on him by the Barack Obama administration. The only reason for this was because the President of FIDE visited Damascus several years ago and played chess with the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. This justification is simply indefensible.

As a result, for the first time in 92 years, the FIDE President cannot attend the World Chess Championship Match organized by him. This does not reflect well on the outgoing US administration.

It can only be regretted that the United States of America is again refusing to observe the universal principle that sport should remain above politics. Restrictions of this nature by the US Government run counter to the OSCE commitments, in particular those laid down in the Helsinki Final Act regarding the expansion of links and co-operation in the field of sport and the development of cultural and social contacts.

Moreover, this approach raises questions about the fitness of the United States of America in general to host international sporting events.

Thank you for your attention.