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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1090th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 February 2016

**On the violation of the rights of
migrant children in the European Union**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to draw attention to the alarming trend in the European Union (EU) of the mass disappearance of migrant children and the violation of their rights.

According to information from the European Police Office (Europol), Member States of the EU do not currently have information available on the more than 10,000 minors who have entered the territory and registered as asylum seekers.

Presumably, not all of the missing persons should be treated *a priori* as victims of trafficking in human beings, however, data from Europol indicates that a fair number of the migrant children have fallen into the clutches of criminal groups and are being exploited, including for sexual purposes.

It is worth noting that the European Commission has preferred to distance itself from the mass violations uncovered. Acknowledging that the data provided are cause for concern, the European Commission has in fact delegated Europol to resolve the matter.

According to data from the Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT), over 85,000 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in the EU in 2015. By way of comparison, this number had been 23,000 in 2014. It is safe to assume that altogether, several times more unaccompanied children are arriving on the territory of the EU and are potential victims of exploitation, trafficking in human beings and recruitment to criminal groups and terrorist cells.

The number of children of illegal migrants arriving in the EU along the main and “southern” route is also on the rise. In December 2015 and January 2016, they accounted for over 35 per cent of the total. These figures are also confirmed in data provided recently by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

It goes without saying that at a time when the EU is struggling with the influx of illegal migration, one is ill-equipped to speak about due respect for the rights of child migrants if the EU cannot arrange for migrants to be counted and registered in a normal way, let alone for their living conditions.

We call on EU Member States unwaveringly to fulfil their commitments with regard to the rights of the child and anti-trafficking, as adopted under relevant international human rights conventions and within the OSCE. I should hope that the EU will not stand idly by in response to this truly large-scale violation of children's rights. We call on the Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings to continue to pay particular attention to the matter. Moreover, why does the EU, which foists the services of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on countries "to the east of Vienna", not invite the Office to carry out monitoring on its territory and to formulate recommendations for the European Commission?

A separate question is whether the measures taken by the EU to save refugees at sea, including children, are sufficient and whether it bears responsibility for the many deaths in cases when the refugees have not received assistance in the territorial waters of its members.

Thank you for your attention.