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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1107th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 July 2016

**In connection with the question raised by the European Union about  
freedom of association in Russia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have explained the essence of Russian legislation governing non-commercial organizations in Russia on several occasions. We invite our colleagues to familiarize themselves with the statements in question, notably of 12 November 2015 and 18 February, 17 March and 2 June 2016.

Valentina Cherevatenko, Chair of the Board of the Women of the Don Foundation for Civil Society Development, is under investigation. She is suspected of deliberately circumventing the law on non-commercial organizations and of acting as a foreign agent. She refused to register her organization in the corresponding register. This organization is engaged in political activities in Russia and the North Caucasus in particular and receives foreign funding, for example from the Heinrich Böll Foundation, which has close links with the German Green Party. This refusal is a clear violation of the law by Ms. Cherevatenko. What does this have to do with “ever-shrinking space for critical voices”?

We should like to remind you that the requirements of Russian legislation apply equally to everyone and we find it strange to hear calls from advocates of the rule of law for what amounts to exclusive treatment for some “deserving persons”.

Thank you for your attention.