

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1088th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 February 2016

**Regarding the ban preventing Russian  
journalists and public figures from entering Moldova**

Mr. Chairperson,

Since September 2014, the Republic of Moldova has seen a marked intensification of measures restricting the entry of Russian citizens into the country. Journalists, human rights advocates and public figures are primarily affected and are often subjected to many hours of humiliating interrogations and vetting prior to entry. There have been dozens of incidents of this kind reported.

As early as last year, we drew the Permanent Council's attention to similar incidents involving our journalists.

Since then, the situation has only got worse. On 7 December 2015, for example, a delegation of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation was not permitted to enter Moldova. Russian human rights advocates, particularly from the well-respected non-governmental organization Moscow Bureau for Human Rights, were also not allowed across the border. The personae non gratae were announced to have been the director of the news agency Rossiya Segodnya, Dmitriy Kiselyov, journalist Andrey Kondrashov and radio host and writer Armen Gasparyan.

The latest escalation occurred on 20 January of this year, as a number of groups of journalists were refused access to Moldovan territory. These included Alexander Balitskiy from the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company; Kirill Olkov and Anna Zabroda from LifeNews; Alexander Malyshev from Ren-TV; Ilya Kostin and Dmitriy Bedarev from the television channel Perviy Kanal; Stanislav Krasilnikov from the news agency TASS; and Timur Khursandov from RIA Novosti. A film crew of the Orthodox satellite television channel Tsarygrad had been sent to Russia and was due to go to the city of Bălți by private invitation of the local bishop. Alexander Balitskiy is prohibited from entering the country for a period of five years.

A number of reporters from other countries were also not allowed to enter the country, including a freelance correspondent for France-Presse and Martin Dorazín, an employee at a Czech radio station, who incidentally described the process of his rough deportation. All that they did wrong was to arrive in Chişinău from Moscow. It should be mentioned that, inexplicably, we have not seen any reaction from the French and Czech colleagues nor from the European Union to this arbitrary treatment.

Later, a representative of the Moldovan border police, Dorina Cebotari, explained that the reporters had been refused entry because they had supposedly not mentioned the purpose of their visit. However, according to the accounts of many of the affected parties, they had been turned back at the very moment that they had honestly said that they were journalists and had handed over their accreditation documents.

We consider this treatment to be a blatant violation by the Moldovan Government of its international human rights commitments, not least as regards media freedom and pluralism, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and other freedoms.

We fully share the concern expressed in this regard by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in a press release on 23 January. We support the appeal to the Moldovan authorities to refrain from restrictive and discriminatory measures against the media and to allow journalists to carry out their professional duties without hindrance. We agree with Ms. Dunja Mijatović that restrictions of this kind have an adverse effect on the freedom to receive information and should not be justified as some kind of anti-propaganda campaign, as the Moldovan Government is trying to portray it.

Thank you for your attention.