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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1066th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 September 2015

**Regarding the expulsion from Lithuania of a group of  
Latvian human rights activists**

Mr. Chairperson,

Recently, a group of Latvian human rights activists – Alexander Kuzmin from the Latvian Human Rights Committee, Joseph Koren from the Latvian Anti-Fascist Committee and the historian Alexander Rzhavin – were expelled from Lithuania. They had arrived in Klaipeda for an international conference on “Ethno-nationalism – a threat to security and stability in the world”, organized by Lithuanian civil society. Local state border service officials instantly and without any explanation presented the Latvian delegates with notice of a ban on entry into Lithuania until 2020 and demanded that they leave the country immediately. As a result, the conference was all but sabotaged. All the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lithuania had to say was that these Latvian citizens had been put on a list of undesirable aliens whose activities could “threaten security or public order”.

This is essentially about crudely exerting pressure on the activities of human rights activists and attempting to prevent them from exercising their right to freedom of expression. This also runs counter to the OSCE commitments to freedom of movement and human contacts. I recall that according to the Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE of 1991 (paragraph 43.2), participating States should “endeavour to facilitate visits to their countries by non-governmental organizations from within any of the participating States in order to observe human dimension conditions”.

All in all, this incident served as further clear confirmation of the continuing policy of Vilnius to limit the freedom of speech of both Lithuanians and foreigners alike whose views do not conform to the official line. Lithuanian civil society activists are in no doubt that the decision to refuse entry to the above-named group of public figures from Latvia was made on the direct order of the official authorities, namely the Department of State Security. The director of the Lithuanian Centre for Research and Protection of Fundamental Rights Ms. Oksana Bekeriene frankly stated that she was in shock over what had happened and was now scared to go to humanitarian and human rights events being held even in Latvia, fearing

being either blocked from entering this neighbouring country or scandalously expelled from it.

It is typical that in the European Union, where they care so much for the situation of human rights activists, when it comes to countries “to the east of Vienna”, as always they chose shamefully to “turn a blind eye” to this outrageous case on their own territory. This is to say nothing of the Latvian authorities who did not even think to intervene on behalf of human rights activists from their own country.

Thank you for your attention.