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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1129th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 January 2017

**On the violations of the human rights of
asylum seekers and migrants in European Union Member States**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like once again to draw attention to the situation of asylum seekers and migrants in European Union Member States. We have already raised this question in the Permanent Council on several occasions, but the situation remains difficult.

This is demonstrated in particular by the latest report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, which states that violence, harassment and manifestations of xenophobia with regard to migrants in the EU are still widespread. Human rights activists, non-governmental organizations and politicians who support migrants are subjected to intimidation and violence, and journalists writing about this problem have also received threats.

One of the most serious problems according to the Agency is the rise in the number of attacks and other forms of aggression, including arson, on migrant reception centres. Official statistics indicate that the number of offences has grown to hundreds and thousands of cases per year – depending on the country concerned. There are examples of EU Member States where attempts to set fire to migrant centres take place on average once every three days.

In the opinion of European experts, the mass influx of asylum seekers and the terrorist acts in a number of countries have fanned the flames of xenophobia in EU Member States, where hostility towards Muslims, including women, has increased. This is facilitated, say human rights activists, by a public climate in the EU that allows open and violent expression of intolerance.

The EU Agency report mentions that one abiding problem for the European Union is the fact that the individual Member States have no system for collecting and/or publishing statistical data about hate crimes against migrants. We have already raised this problem here. It would seem that the only thing that can be stated systemically about the EU is the absence of such a system.

Only a few EU Member States are monitoring the human rights of migrants and collecting data. Not many of them publish this information. As the Agency points out, this has a negative impact on the prevention of racist incidents and the access of their victims to justice.

The situation is also exacerbated by the fact that many migrants fail to report acts of violence. Among the main reasons for this are a lack of trust in the law enforcement authorities and the fear that communicating with the authorities could lead to arrest and deportation and adversely affect the processing of the request for asylum.

We once again urge the leadership of the EU and its Member States to strictly observe their human rights obligations with regard to migrants and refugees. We reiterate the need for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to make a comprehensive assessment of their situation in the EU and to elaborate appropriate recommendations. We believe that the European Commission could make such a request to the Office. Otherwise it would look as if this body was created to work only “to the east of Vienna”.

Thank you for your attention.