

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1144th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 May 2017

On World Press Freedom Day

Mr. Chairperson,

World Press Freedom Day, which was established in 1993 by a United Nations General Assembly resolution, is marked every year on 3 May.

A free, pluralistic and independent press is a necessary element for the democratic development of society. It is both a privilege and a great responsibility to be a journalist. The fact is that reporters have access to a wide audience and can directly influence public opinion. That is why it is so important to be able to deliver information without distorting its essence. This is the skill of a true professional.

World Press Freedom Day is also an opportunity to talk about a range of issues connected with the freedom and pluralism of the media. On the one hand, this date serves as a reminder that the press is subjected to censorship and pressure all over the world, fined and shut down temporarily or completely. Journalists and editors are frequently victims of threats, attacks, detention and even murder.

On the other hand, this day gives journalists themselves an opportunity to think about the prospects for the development of their profession, about the future of the media and ethical standards in its work.

We have repeatedly emphasized that freedom of the press is not the same thing as freedom from responsibility. It is the task of the OSCE participating States to create an environment in which freedom of expression and respect for the rights, honour and dignity of every human being can be ensured in equal measure.

In practice, however, things are not how we would like them to be. Virtually every day we are confronted with examples of the media being used for political purposes, aggressive propaganda and the dissemination of fake news. There are flagrant violations of journalists' rights, including on the basis of whether they are citizens of a particular country.

In that connection, this situation is assessed completely differently by many in the OSCE, depending on the political circumstances. In some cases, incidents involving journalists are deliberately exaggerated, while in other cases things are assiduously hushed up.

There needs to be an end to such double standards. We trust that the future OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media will pay due attention to this topic and facilitate the development of constructive dialogue among the participating States.

Thank you for your attention.