

PC.DEL/504/16

15 April 2016

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1096th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 April 2016

Regarding the situation in Macedonia

Mr. Chairperson,

We were concerned to see reports of the intensification of political confrontation in Macedonia and of the clashes which occurred in Skopje. We call on all parties to engage in political dialogue and not to be provoked into a new chapter of a crisis that has already been going on for over a year.

We note that the Macedonian opposition, including with support from outside, has again started to fan the flames of the internal political conflict, with the aim of disrupting the early parliamentary elections scheduled for 5 June 2016. The elections are the only legitimate democratic way out of protracted crisis. Meanwhile, as it had been agreed in summer 2015 with the active assistance of the European Union and the United States of America that elections would be taking place, Western partners must adhere to the agreements made and to their commitments in this regard.

We consider it to be unacceptable to shake up the fragile situation in Macedonia which has been created by the country's complicated ethnic and confessional structure. Provoking a scenario like in Ukraine or stirring up illegal activities and a coup d'état from outside could set the wheels in motion for profound upheaval in Macedonia and destabilization in the Balkans at large.

We urge all those with political clout and representatives of the international community to continue to work towards solving the situation in Macedonia through peaceful means, while respecting the actions and decisions of the country's legitimate authorities and leadership.

Thank you for your attention.