

PC.DEL/1159/18  
5 October 2018

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1196th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 October 2018

**On the referendum in the Republic of Macedonia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We draw your attention to the paradoxical situation when the first comments at the Permanent Council on a referendum held in a sovereign State are made not by the Permanent Representative of Macedonia but by the representatives of the United States of America and the European Union. This inevitably prompts the conclusion that outside powers had an interest in this referendum and a role in its organization, pursuing their Euro-Atlantic agenda in Macedonia and in the Western Balkans in general.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has already commented on this matter. We are surprised by the international reaction to the 30 September referendum in Macedonia on endorsing the Prespa Agreement on changing the country's name to North Macedonia and on the country's accession to the European Union and NATO. It is widely known that prominent political figures from the EU countries and NATO openly urged Macedonia's people to vote "yes". This was reflected even in the preliminary findings and conclusions of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). In our view, not only are such practices unacceptable but they are hypocritical too, particularly given these countries' exaggerated "concern" over foreign intervention in any electoral or internal process.

The outcome of the referendum in Macedonia showed that shameless meddling in another country's internal affairs and attempts to influence the voters were a failure. Macedonia's State Election Commission declared the referendum invalid due to insufficient voter turnout (36.9 per cent as opposed to the necessary 50 per cent plus one vote). But this situation has not stopped the EU and NATO from attempting to present the results as "broad support" for the Prespa Agreement, as their representatives here just stated. The Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, even rushed to declare that NATO was ready to accept Macedonia as a member at the start of 2019, essentially anticipating the vote on ratifying the document in the Macedonian and Greek parliaments. This clearly continues the outrageous outside intervention in Macedonia's internal affairs with the aim of drawing Macedonia into NATO whatever the cost and moving the dividing line "eastwards", including by openly ignoring the views of almost 63 per cent of the population.

We again note an example of the ODIHR's biased conclusions based on its observation of elections in participating States, this time with regard to the referendum in Macedonia. The report presents the mass propaganda campaign conducted by the West in a positive light and the issue of the results' invalidity is avoided altogether.

We reiterate that Russia's position of principle remains unchanged: a lasting solution can be reached only by the two parties – Macedonia and Greece – without outside pressure and solely within the legal framework and with broad public support.

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Russia is following developments closely. Our view is that, in accordance with paragraph 3 of UN Security Council resolution 845, the results of the talks between Macedonia and Greece will be examined at the UN Security Council.

Thank you for your attention.