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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 September 2011

Regarding the situation in Kosovo

Mr. Chairperson,

As we in fact predicted, there has been a new outbreak of tension in the Serbian territory of Kosovo. We regret that, despite urgent calls by the United Nations and the OSCE, the Pristina authorities once again took unilateral action in northern Kosovo to establish control over the administrative border with Serbia.

We are surprised that the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) were associated with this operation. This can only be seen as acts which run counter to their status-neutral mandate and the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244. As a result, inter-ethnic tensions have developed in the territory once again, there is a risk of clashes, and the continuation of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue initiated by the European Union has been called into question.

References to agreements on customs stamps reached during the last round of dialogue are unfounded. At the United Nations Security Council meeting on 15 September, Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, confirmed that the questions of establishing customs control at checkpoints 1 and 31 were not discussed at the meeting in Brussels on 2 September.

We insist that authorized international presences in the territory adhere strictly to their status-neutral mandates. We urge that all possible measures be taken to prevent a further escalation of inter-ethnic tension and that new acts involving the use of force against the peaceful Serbian population not be permitted. We expect that the Chairmanship, the Conflict Prevention Centre and the field presence will continue to follow closely the development of the situation in northern Kosovo and will inform the Permanent Council promptly of any new events.

Thank you for your attention.