

PC.DEL/1212/14
21 October 2014

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1019th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 October 2014

On freedom of expression

Mr. Chairperson,

We take note of our colleagues' concerns.

This is not the first time that we hear that freedom of expression and freedom of the media are being hindered in Russia. It is a pity that the detailed information we presented at previous Permanent Council meetings regarding the situation in this area in Russia simply fell on deaf ears as far as our partners were concerned.

As for the law signed by the Russian President restricting the share of foreign capital in national media, we would recall that the transitional period will last until 1 February 2017. During that time, media proprietors will be able to bring their statutory documents into line with the new requirements and, in particular, reduce the share of foreign capital from 50 to 20 per cent. The law does not apply to media organizations that do not have a mass media licence or those established on the basis of international agreements. Representative offices of foreign media in Russia will continue to operate as before.

In this context, attempts to link media pluralism and freedom of expression with the share of foreign capital are groundless to say the least. I might add that the new changes in the legislation have met with understanding on the part of the journalistic community in Russia.

At the same time, our Western partners have somehow forgotten that in a number of European Union (EU) and North American countries there are also restrictions on the share of foreign capital in the media, and Russia has not carried out any kind of revolution here. For example, in Canada the share of foreign capital in television and radio broadcasting cannot exceed 20 per cent, in France there is also a limit of 20 per cent for non-EU Member States, and in the United States of America the share cannot be more than 25 per cent. In the United Kingdom foreign capital is not allowed at all in public broadcasting.

The selective and blatantly politicized approach of the European Union and the United States to the selection of topics for them to be “concerned” about never ceases to amaze us. Why do the same countries come in for criticism time and time again, while blatant violations in other countries, including EU countries and the United States, meet with stubborn silence?

Unfortunately, we have still not heard any condemnation of the suspension of the broadcasting of Russian television channels in Lithuania and Latvia. We do not hear any calls for Ukraine to ensure freedom and pluralism of the media in the light of the arbitrary treatment of Russian television channels and Russian journalists and the hounding of political dissent there. We have not seen any reaction to the dismissal of dissident journalists and television moderators in Finland, France and the United States. We have spoken about this in detail. The pressure on editorial offices and journalists in Belgium, the United Kingdom and the United States of America is ignored. The mass protest of journalists in Germany who were outraged at the one-sided reporting of events in Ukraine did not become a matter of concern.

The unwillingness to hear a different point of view was illustrated perfectly for us during the Warsaw review conference, when there were attempts to silence journalists representing alternative views at the side events.

The situation regarding freedom of expression and media pluralism in Western countries is best summed up in the words of the British journalist Brendan O’Neill: “What we have here in the West is not journalism, but narrative-making, the squeezing of various bloody events into a predetermined script, whether they fit or not.”

We find it a great pity that the European Union and the United States, which try to claim at every turn to be the global defenders of freedom of the media and freedom of expression, behave in an irresponsible manner, to put it mildly. Although, to be honest, we have long become accustomed to this.

Thank you for your attention.