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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 981st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 January 2014

In response to the statement by the representative of Georgia

Mr. Chairperson,

In light of the statement by our Georgian colleague at today's meeting of the Permanent Council, we should like to shed some light on the facts of the matter. The Psou River forms part of the border between Russia and Abkhazia. What is happening there is a temporary technical measure to improve the security of the participants in the Olympic Games.

Last week, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Abkhazia adopted a decision to change the boundaries of the border zone in the Gagra district of Abkhazia during the period from 20 January to 21 March 2014. During the aforementioned period, the border zone will extend 11 kilometres into the territory of Abkhazia from the State border with the Russian Federation. There are no plans for any restrictions on entering this border zone. The authorities of the Republic of Abkhazia have merely introduced additional border control measures, including identity checks for persons travelling to settlements within the border zone or heading towards the State border with Russia, and inspections of vehicles to see if they are carrying weapons, ammunition, explosives or other prohibited items.

As far as we are aware, this temporary measure is part of the arrangements being made by the leadership of the Republic of Abkhazia in agreement with the Russian authorities to help ensure the security of the XXII Olympic Winter Games in Sochi. This is, first and foremost, the security of the athletes participating in the games, including Georgian athletes, as well as the guests attending this global celebration of sport.

As for the subject of the installation of fences along the State borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Georgia, which was raised yet again at today's meeting, we should like to point out once again that Georgia's border with South Ossetia is 400 kilometres long and only 45 kilometres of it is marked in order to avoid unlawful crossings of the border line that may result in complications.

Thank you for your attention.