

PC.DEL/1469/14
18 December 2014

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1030th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 December 2014

**Regarding the Personal Representatives of the
Chairperson-in-Office for tolerance**

Mr. Chairperson,
Personal Representatives,

Thank you for the interesting information on your activities in countering various forms of intolerance. The joint country visits – this year to Russia, the United States of America, Denmark and Turkey – are an important aspect of the Representatives' work.

The fight against various kinds of intolerance is one of the key priorities of the OSCE. Numerous decisions and commitments have been adopted within the Organization on promoting tolerance and combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, various forms of religious intolerance, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism. Corresponding national legislation has been developed in many countries, and the work of law enforcement authorities stepped up. Civil society is increasingly involved in combating these negative phenomena.

Unfortunately, the situation in the OSCE area is still far from ideal. The danger posed to society by racist, xenophobic and other radical ideas is growing – both to the east and the west of Vienna.

Not only religious minorities but also major religions suffer from intolerance. Information presented at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw by several non-governmental organizations reveals hundreds of cases of intolerance towards Christians and the desecration of Christian places of worship in Western European countries, including in places with a predominantly Christian population. The harassment of Orthodox priests and the desecration of Orthodox churches in Ukraine are particularly worrying. The difficult situation of Christians in a number of OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation is well known.

Judging by the tougher migration policy in a number of European Union Member States and the absence of a common position on accepting refugees, these countries appear

unprepared for the consequences of the complex events in the Middle East and North Africa, which they welcomed and in many respects even encouraged. The rise in anti-immigrant sentiments is becoming a major problem for many OSCE States, including Russia, and is something that we need to actively work on solving.

The resurgence of anti-Semitism remains a serious challenge for the OSCE. There have been anti-Semitic demonstrations and protests in many European countries recently involving racist and Nazi slogans. The number of anti-Semitic incidents in Western Europe has increased manifold.

In recent years the Russian authorities together with civil society and the media have achieved some quite decent results in eradicating this shameful phenomenon. We are prepared to share our experience in this area.

The rise in intolerance towards Muslims, which even prosperous European countries cannot cope with, is extremely worrying. Anti-Muslim disturbances involving radical nationalists are increasing, as are the desecration of mosques and the spread of hate speech in social media. Attempts to associate manifestations of violent extremism and terrorism with a particular religion are totally unacceptable.

The growth of racism and other radical ideologies and views in the United States is an extremely worrying trend. When repealing a key provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Act last year, the United States Supreme Court was clearly overly hasty with its assessment that “racism and discrimination are relics of the past”.

The continuing entry into parliaments of parties advocating nationalistic and sometimes even neo-Nazi ideologies is a cause for serious concern. Neo-Nazi demonstrations and rallies and the glorification of Waffen-SS veterans and their henchmen do not receive the consideration they should within the OSCE.

Attempts to justify racist propaganda, or any other radical views for that matter, as freedom of expression and assembly and such like are particularly worrying. Evidently, over the past 70 years the lessons of “Kristallnacht”, the Holocaust and the mass extermination of entire peoples in the name of racial superiority have begun to be forgotten.

It is most regrettable that because of the position of one country, where aggressive nationalism is rife, it was not possible in the Basel Ministerial Commemorative Declaration on the Seventieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War to include a condemnation of the Holocaust and all forms of ethnic cleansing and mass extermination. We call on the participating States not only to roundly condemn and carefully investigate all such cases, but also to make more active use of the opportunities provided by the OSCE to combat these dangerous tendencies.

We adopted an important document in Basel – the Declaration on Enhancing Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism. Countering intolerance towards Christians and Muslims and combating racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism deserve the same attention. Facilitating inter-ethnic, intercultural and interreligious dialogue based on respect for the values accumulated by civilized society should form the basis of our work together.

In conclusion, we should like to wish the Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office every success in their important endeavours.

Thank you for your attention.