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

8 March 2012

**Regarding the statement by the delegation of Georgia on the incident near
the Georgia-Abkhazia border**

Mr. Chairperson,

As regards the statement by our Georgian colleagues on the incident on 4 March in the village of Ganmukhuri in the Zugdidi district of Georgia, the information we have is not complete at the moment. All that is known is the place of the skirmish and the involvement of six unidentified persons. No one was killed or harmed. We should like to point out that this is the first skirmish for quite a long time.

We are surprised in this context by the press release of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) that was read out today and by the statement delivered by the United States of America, both of which assert that there has been growing tension and an increase in incidents in this region in the last three months. On the contrary, the regularly convening Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism for the Abkhazia-Georgia border region, particularly the last meeting, concluded that the situation in the region has stabilized.

As far as the question itself of access by the EUMM to sovereign Abkhazia is concerned, the international mandate agreed during the negotiations back in autumn 2008 clearly restricts the Mission's activities to Georgia alone and does not refer to the territory of its neighbours. There is no basis for its review.

Thank you for your attention.