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Delegation of Switzerland

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND
AT THE 923rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 6 September 2012

The human rights situation in the Russian Federation

Mr. Chairperson,

I am making this statement on behalf of Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

We are concerned at a series of new legal rulings that have recently been enacted in the Russian Federation and at the negative impact that those rulings are having on human rights in that country.

For several months now, Russia has enacted at least four new rulings whose effect has been to restrict the freedoms of assembly, association and expression in the country. We are speaking here of amendments to the law on public gatherings, the law restricting freedom of information on the Internet, amendments to the Criminal Code restoring criminal responsibility for defamation, something that was abolished in November 2011, as well as the law conferring the status of “foreign agent” on certain Russian non-governmental organizations financed from abroad. Other factors, such as the conviction of the members of the Pussy Riot group or the new obstacles to freedom of assembly on the part of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender persons at the regional level complete the list of the recent significant developments as regards fundamental freedoms in the Russian Federation.

We are disturbed at these measures and at their restrictive nature and we call on the Russian authorities to make every effort to limit the disastrous effects of these laws. We shall continue to monitor closely the development of this situation and the implementation of these new rulings.

More generally, we are very concerned at the fact that quite a few States prefer to avoid a public discussion of these issues that may be objectionable to the authorities or that is regarded as shocking by parts of society who see in it a limitation of certain laws or practices.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.