

PC.DEL/406/14

11 April 2014

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 994th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 April 2014

Regarding International Roma Day

Mr. Chairperson,

International Roma Day is a good opportunity to reflect on the situation regarding the integration of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE region. Despite the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area, other commitments in this area, including those adopted at the most recent Ministerial Council meeting in Kyiv, and the existence of large-scale projects and powerful resources, including financial ones, the situation remains far from ideal.

Much remains to be done by the OSCE countries to further the successful integration of Roma into all areas of social life. Effective ways of countering xenophobia should be found. Priority should be given to education, social inclusion and the protection of Roma children. The nature of the problems of the Roma minority that face us in ten years' time will depend on this.

During the last 20 years, Russia has done a great deal to improve the situation of Roma, drawing on both international best practices and the positive outcomes as regards the integration and preservation of Roma culture during the Soviet period. Our experience in safeguarding the rights of national minorities, including those of Roma, shows that this should not be treated as a separate issue affecting only one ethnic group. The integration of Roma and Sinti should be considered holistically as part of ensuring the civil and social rights of national minorities in general.

We believe that precisely this approach is the key to the successful solution of the problems of the Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area.