

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO,  
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1049th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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**On the protection of private and family life in the OSCE area**

Mr. Chairperson,

Recently, reports by human rights activists and the media of systematic wiretapping of telephone calls of citizens, companies and media outlets by various government agencies in a number of OSCE participating States have become increasingly frequent. Under the pretext of combating extremism and radicalization, law enforcement authorities are requesting an unprecedented increase in their powers in this area and virtually unrestricted access to information on private individuals.

For example, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defence of Belgium are currently developing a package of proposals aimed at expanding the list of acts, for which wiretapping and the installation of special equipment to monitor the contacts of persons suspected of being involved in or sympathizing with radical Islam and terrorism will be permitted if such acts are suspected. That said, the law now already allows the monitoring of telecommunications and telephone conversations of private individuals, while mobile phone service providers are required to provide appropriate assistance to the judicial and investigative authorities. According to experts, around 7,000 investigations involving wiretapping were carried out in Belgium in 2012.

The Norwegian police service has also requested an unprecedented expansion of its powers, including full access to the telephone conversations and call histories of all subscribers to Norwegian telecommunications companies and the capability of reading information from telecommunications channels using remote electronic devices. This idea was mentioned specifically by the head of the Norwegian Police Security Service, Benedicte Bjørnland, at the 40th conference of Nordic lawyers on 21 and 22 August 2014 and supported by the Minister of Justice, Anders Anundsen. These initiatives, it must be said had a mixed reception in Norwegian civil society.

The Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSE) is actively checking Internet traffic, sifting through files in violation of the laws on privacy. The Canadian television channel CBC and the United States publication *The Intercept* have published

information in this regard. The reference here, in particular, is to the Canadian electronic intelligence agency's top-secret special programme "Levitation", which is designed to collect and analyse basic data on 10 to 15 million operations a day on file-sharing sites around the world, and the fact that, contrary to the statements by the Canadian Government, the CSE is engaged in the surveillance of Canadians themselves on a massive scale, although its competence lies in countering external threats.

Against this background, the United States of America, which is notorious for its interference in private life, stands out, especially as the information provided to the media by Edward Snowden, as well as several excerpts from official reports on cases of illegal wiretapping, recently published by the National Security Agency (NSA), show that there is no way the United States can serve as an example of democracy in this area. There are glaring examples, such as NSA employees using their official position to their personal advantage, including spying on their own husbands and wives.

What is especially worrying is the fact that despite the closure of the NSA programme by President Barack Obama in 2013, the activities of various services resulting in interference in private life have not ceased. For example, the Intelligence Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration, which since 1992 conducted, in co-operation with the Pentagon, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and customs and border control services, a programme to intercept information on telephone calls from the United States to 116 countries, has simply changed the form of its work. Instead of automatic information collection, a list is compiled on a daily basis of over 1,000 "suspect" telephone numbers which are checked against telephone company databases.

We frequently hear appeals within the OSCE, including on the part of OSCE institutions, not to use counter-extremism and counter-terrorism legislation to exert pressure on civil society or restrict freedom of expression, association and assembly.

We urge our colleagues to avoid double standards and to apply this appeal to themselves in line with the commitments of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE on the "protection of private and family life, correspondence and electronic communications".

Thank you for your attention.