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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 981st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 January 2014

**In response to the statements by the Chairpersons of the OSCE Economic
and Environmental Committee and Human Dimension Committee**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome our distinguished colleagues, the chairpersons of the two committees, and thank them for outlining their vision of the activities in the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension and human dimension this year. As in previous years, we intend to actively assist you and the Chairmanship-in-Office in achieving the goals that have been set.

Ambassador Algayerová,

For the most part we agree with your proposals regarding the substance of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee's agenda. The work in the second dimension is acquiring particular importance in the light of efforts to overcome the consequences of the global financial crisis. At the same time, it is essential to strengthen the system-wide and strategic thrust of this work. In our view, it should be geared towards a real contribution by the OSCE to the formation of an economic basis for the future security community, namely a single economic space extending from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

We see great unifying potential here. We all want to improve the market economy of our countries and increase the prosperity of our citizens. Most of us are members of the World Trade Organization or are preparing to accede to that body. All of us face similar problems – rising unemployment and deterioration in the socio-economic situation of our people. The OSCE could make a contribution here by identifying areas for possible co-operation between integration mechanisms in different parts of our common space and by eradicating the dividing lines that continue to exist.

We attach great importance to the idea of a thematic meeting on the problems of money-laundering and recovery of stolen assets. We are looking forward to an additional impetus being imparted to the efforts of the OSCE participating States to improve good governance and counter corruption. The Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting planned for October, which will focus on the implementation of the Dublin declaration, is intended to do just that.

At the same time, we have doubts regarding the usefulness of holding a meeting on gender and the environment. We have great respect for women and are ready to discuss their problems, providing of course that these are real problems and not artificial ones.

We are willing to consider the idea of a joint meeting of the Economic and Environmental Committee and the Human Dimension Committee. It should, however, be devoted to cross-dimensional problems that are of real significance to everyone. We believe that at such a meeting it would be useful to discuss the issue of safeguarding socio-economic rights against the background of the financial crisis.

Ambassador Kvile,

Overall we support your approaches to the substance of the OSCE's human dimension events. We hope that it will finally prove possible to achieve a balance in the work in the human dimension and to make real and not just cosmetic progress in the reform of the third basket. We trust that we shall manage to avoid filling the Human Dimension Committee's agenda with non-consensus topics that fall outside the framework of the tasks set in decisions adopted by the Ministerial Council and Permanent Council.

There is a need to continue work on bringing order to the election monitoring procedure by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Last year's discussion of the comparative analysis of the election legislation and practice of OSCE participating States raised quite a number of questions calling for further discussion. A number of States advocate this and the discussion needs to be carried out on a system-wide basis.

We agree with the emphasis on implementing existing commitments without artificially forcing the adoption of new Ministerial Council decisions. The priorities of the Swiss Chairmanship, which we intend to take as a starting point in the organization of our work, can serve as a good basis for the formation of a unifying agenda in the human dimension. We trust that the experience accumulated will make it possible to pay due attention to topics that are of real importance to everyone.

Among these topics we consider the prevention of torture to be a promising one. Tolerance and ensuring the rights of national minorities are subjects deserving attention. We support the need to safeguard human rights during the financial crisis. This is a question not only for the second basket but also for the human dimension.

We support the proposal to prepare a commemorative Ministerial Council declaration to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in good time.

We hope that combating manifestations of aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism, reducing statelessness, protecting the rights of children and freedom of movement, preventing trafficking in human beings and preserving traditional cultural, religious, family and moral values will also be duly reflected in the Human Dimension Committee's work.

We believe that as regards a number of traditional topics examined in the OSCE year after year without particular success it would be worth seeking new aspects that could help us to achieve consensus. I am thinking, for example, of the role of freedom of assembly and

association in ensuring economic and social rights, or the protection of the rights of national minorities. As for freedom of the media and freedom of expression, extremely pressing problems such as increasing the responsibility of journalists and combating corruption in the media and among journalists remain blank spots for now.

It would be very useful to find common ground on guaranteeing privacy, including in the context of the fight against terrorism, on the role of national human rights institutions, on preventing arbitrary detention of prisoners and on combating hate speech in the media, particularly as it is spread by means of information and communication technologies.

Thank you for your attention. I wish you every success in your work.