

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 947th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 April 2013

**Regarding the inquiries into the activities of Russian  
non-commercial organizations**

Mr. Chairperson,

In response to the question raised by a number of delegations regarding inquiries into the activities of non-commercial organizations (NCOs) on the territory of the Russian Federation, we should like to state our views on that subject.

The comments of our colleagues fail to address one important point, namely the need to recognize that it is those NCOs that receive funding from abroad and that engage in political activities that are being inspected. The amendments adopted last year to the legislation governing the work of NCOs are aimed primarily at enhancing the transparency of their activities and also of their sources of funding. Naturally, our laws, just like those of other countries, provide for regular inspections by the control authorities of various organizations. This is not some kind of particular innovation in worldwide political practice. Exactly the same kind of law, for example, has been in effect in the United States since 1938, while in the United Kingdom charitable organizations that have an annual income of over 10,000 pounds sterling are required to give a detailed account of the sources of their funding and the way it is spent to a special Charity Commission.

What is more, the final Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE of 1990 clearly states that non-commercial organizations may receive voluntary financial contributions from national and international sources “as provided for by law”, that is, this provision is regulated at the national level.

The NCO inquiries, which were planned as long ago as December of last year, are being carried out by the agencies of the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, that Office being required to monitor the observance of laws adopted in our country. All physical and legal persons operating in Russia, including affiliates and branches of foreign non-commercial organizations, are required to take this into account. It goes without saying that all appeals on the part of NCOs regarding violations of their rights and legitimate interests during an inspection will be examined without delay, with the applicants informed of the results.

I should like to emphasize that the actions of the Russian law enforcement authorities are aimed not at shutting down non-commercial organizations but at ensuring transparency as regards their sources of funding, including foreign sources. We are seriously concerned at a situation when against the background of considerable funding of NCOs by foreign sources (over the last four months almost a billion dollars were transferred from abroad to the accounts of 654 organizations, including through embassies accredited in Moscow), these organizations are not registered as foreign agents, as required by law. The Russian people have a right to know from where this money is coming and for what purposes it is being spent. We take the view that efforts to ensure transparency in the activities of any NCOs should be viewed with understanding by our partners as an important step towards building an open and democratic society in Russia.

For this reason, we view as overt interference in our internal affairs the recent statement by Ms. Victoria Nuland, an official representative of the US Department of State, to the effect that the United States intends to continue to fund non-commercial organizations in Russia through intermediaries in third countries in circumvention of Russian legislation.

We have noted that Ms. Mijatović, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, voiced concerns at the inquiries into the activities of five human rights NCOs, something she has described as “intimidation” and “interference” in their work. Ms. Mijatović saw in this a “negative influence on the freedom of the media”, despite the fact that not one of the NCOs she mentioned has anything to do with the media, that is to say the subject falls outside her mandate. In the face of this excessive attention to imaginary problems we for some reason have seen no reaction by Ms. Mijatović to some genuinely disturbing facts, such as the searching by the police of nine German photojournalists in February of this year.

We are amazed at how assiduously some of our partners, “disturbed” at the situation of Russian NCOs, fail to take note of the considerable assistance the State is making available to non-governmental organizations engaged in socially useful projects and involved in the development of civil society institutions. Under a decision of the President of Russia more than 2 billion roubles were allocated for these purposes for the current year.

Thank you for your attention.