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Delegation of the Russian Federation

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

23 January 2014

Regarding the situation in Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

Like everyone else we are following the situation in Ukraine with concern. It is clear that the demonstrations in the centre of Kyiv are no longer peaceful and have been hijacked by extremists. Organized groups wielding offensive weapons and Molotov cocktails are attacking the law enforcement authorities – and this at time when they are attempting to ensure public order and displaying the utmost restraint. People with firearms have been spotted amongst the demonstrators. The first fatalities have occurred.

These extremists are following blatantly ultra-nationalistic slogans. Anti-Semitic outbursts are heard on the Maidan (Independence Square), there have been anti-Semitic incidents and people have been injured. The Israeli embassy in Kyiv has issued a statement in this connection.

We should like to warn against the danger and inadmissibility of interference from abroad in the internal affairs of sovereign Ukraine. It is inadmissible to flirt with extremism and to provide moral support for those who are whipping up the situation in the country, spurring people on to violent action and openly breaking the law. A representative of the President of the Russian Federation confirmed today that interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine was absolutely unacceptable to the Russian Federation.

We strongly urge our OSCE partners to refrain from any steps that might lead to an escalation of the conflict in Ukraine.

As for the amendments made to Ukrainian laws of 16 January, they are, as we understand it, aimed at strengthening public order. We might point out that the provisions of laws on demonstrations currently in force in European Union countries and the United States of America are frequently more restrictive than similar measures under Ukrainian law. Notably, in a number of Western European countries including Austria, Germany and Belgium, defamation is still a criminal offence. There is nothing new here.

Distinguished colleagues,

The most important thing now is to put a stop to the violence and embark on internal dialogue within Ukraine to find a way out of the present crisis. We are confident that the Ukrainians themselves will be able to deal with this matter on their own, through peaceful dialogue, in keeping with constitutional law and without any external interference.

Thank you for your attention.