

PC.DEL/330/14  
25 March 2014

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 990th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 March 2014

**Regarding freedom of the media in Russia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank our colleagues for the attention they have given to the question of freedom of the media, including the state of affairs in Russia.

I shall reply briefly to the points raised.

First I shall refer to comments on the closure of mass information media in Russia – for example, the situation regarding the agency RIA Novosti. There has been no “closure” of the agency. There has been a reorganization for the sole purpose of reducing costs and increasing the efficiency of its work. In line with a decree by the Russian President, the State information agency RIA Novosti has been wound up and the International Information Agency “Rossiya Segodnya” (“Russia Today”) has been created to replace it. There is a transitional period until the end of March, after which news will go out under the agency’s new name. The aim of this is to maintain the professional pool of journalists, who are still continuing their work successfully today. As a piece of historical information, I would mention that the agency RIA Novosti was established in 1990 to replace its predecessor, the Soviet press agency Novosti. This is normal practice. Times change, and tasks and working methods change.

In connection with the change in the management of “Lenta.ru”, we should like to point out that the publication in question is an entirely private resource. Its owner – Alexander Mamut, a prominent billionaire – has indeed replaced the Editor-in-Chief, Galina Timchenko, and the Director General, Yulia Minder. Ms. Timchenko has completed a ten-year contract, from 2004 to 2014. However, Lenta.ru is operating as normal. I read it constantly. Under Russian law, the owner of a publication has every right to make personnel changes. We do not understand the connection that our partners see here with “freedom of the media”. It is a pity that they did not defend the disappearance of the magazine Itogi.

We did not plan to take up the subject of freedom of the media today. But since our partners have raised the question, without occupying too much of your time, I shall refer to several sources from which we can glean some information that is not without interest

regarding how the United States of America and Europe themselves promote the media freedom and independence of the media and the media pluralism that they so zealously defend in all international forums.

For example, a report by the Committee to Protect Journalists, an international non-governmental organization, gives us a great deal of curious information about the methods used by the United States President's officials to apply pressure on media professionals. And the well-known publicist and politician, the Republican Pat Roberts, commenting on United States news coverage of events in Ukraine, has spoken of a "factory of lies".

In general, many distinguished publicists, analysts and human rights advocates in the United States are expressing concern over increasing bias in the media. In particular, it has been noted in the publication *The Nation* that, in United States press coverage of Russia, a "degradation ... has been under way for many years". This is clear from the example of "shamelessly unprofessional and politically inflammatory articles" about the Sochi Olympics and events in Ukraine. Even in the venerable *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, journalistic standards are no longer adhered to, facts are suppressed and alternative views are not given.

What is more, a number of United States media have reported that the announcement on the air by Liz Wall, news anchor of the channel "Russia Today", that she was quitting her job, supposedly because of disagreement with Russia Today's coverage of events in Ukraine, was staged by the "Foreign Policy Initiative", a neoconservative centre with personalities who are known to everyone behind it.

This is a very eloquent example of "freedom of opinion and freedom of speech".

Thank you for your attention.