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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1044th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 March 2015

**In response to the statement by
Mr. Didier Reynders, Vice-Prime Minister and
Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Belgium**

Mr. Chairperson,
Minister,

We are pleased to welcome you and listened with interest to your ideas about the priorities of the Council of Europe and its co-operation with the OSCE.

We expect the Council of Europe to work in a balanced manner without politicization or double standards. Alongside the OSCE, it is one of the few organizations in Europe that still offers the possibility of fully fledged dialogue and work together. Any attempts to politicize the work of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CECM) in connection with the situation in Ukraine could endanger the Council of Europe's potential for real involvement in the settlement of the Ukrainian crisis and will only lead to further destabilization.

The Council of Europe is called upon to make an important and substantial contribution to a peaceful settlement in Ukraine. We envisage its role as one of helping the people of Ukraine themselves to find a framework and conditions for the free development of its citizens that would ensure unconditional observance of human rights and the Council of Europe's norms and standards.

As we understand it, the efforts to date by Kyiv at constitutional reform and also certain laws, notably the law on lustration, have given rise to serious criticism and recommendations by the experts in the Venice Commission, in particular in relation to the fact that the amendments were elaborated by the Ukrainian authorities without extensive public discussion.

The Council of Europe's expertise could also be drawn on to assist in the implementation of the corresponding provisions of the Package of Measures on a settlement

in Ukraine agreed on 12 February in Minsk, support for which was expressed in the CECM meeting on 26 February.

In the first instance, this applies to constitutional reform. We support the involvement of the Venice Commission experts in discussions in an appropriate working format under the aegis of the Contact Group.

The Minsk Package of Measures, approved by a resolution of the United Nations Security Council, also provides clear guidance as to the entry into force of the new constitution of Ukraine by the end of 2015. Its key component is decentralization with account taken of the special features of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions agreed with representatives of those areas. Moreover, the constitutional reform is contingent on the adoption by the end of 2015 of permanent legislation on the special status of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with the measures set forth in the Minsk document.

We believe that these questions should be taken into account in the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine for 2015 to 2017, which was adopted in January and focuses in particular on constitutional reform, the reform of democratic institutions and the protection of human rights. We would like to see the Council of Europe exert pressure so that the political process in Ukraine is not artificially drawn out. In doing so, the Strasbourg organization will be able to make a real contribution to settlement of the crisis.

We also expect the Council of Europe International Advisory Panel for assisting in investigation of events in Ukraine to draft and publish its report in the near future on the events on the Maidan and also on the investigation of the tragedy in Odessa on 2 May.

Mr. Chairperson,
Minister,

The countries in our two organizations face a number of common challenges. Social destabilization, migration problems, extremism, violent nationalism and neo-Nazism, intolerance and xenophobia pose an increasing threat to modern European societies. There has been a marked exacerbation recently in discrimination and division on ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural and other grounds, inadequate protection of children in particular from cruel treatment, sexual exploitation and pornography, reduced freedom of movement and of the media, and gross violations of the right to privacy.

In view of the limited resources, it is important to maximize the effectiveness of our joint efforts. The Council of Europe has elaborated a solid international legal framework in humanitarian affairs. The OSCE is a unique forum operating on the basis of consensus and the sovereign equality of States for fostering open dialogue, the prevention and settlement of conflicts, improving mutual understanding and strengthening co-operation. The two organizations should not duplicate each other's activities but should be complementary. In that regard, it is important for the modalities for co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe and other organizations to be placed on a collectively agreed basis.

In 2005, the OSCE and the Council of Europe defined four priority areas for co-operation: combating terrorism, trafficking in human beings, the rights of ethnic minorities, and tolerance and non-discrimination. Certain achievements notwithstanding,

there is still plenty of scope for action. In that connection, it is also important to continue concentrating on those areas and not to embark on a search for new issues and directions.

Thank you for your attention.