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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 956th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 June 2013

**In response to the report by the
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in welcoming the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović.

We note that the Representative on Freedom of the Media is making efforts to rectify the geographical imbalance in her activities. This is evident even from her press releases. Last year, 71 press releases were devoted to the situation in States to the east of Vienna, and only 15 to western counties. In the first half of this year, the picture has changed somewhat: 25 versus 11, although the fact that a large part of today's report by the Representative is devoted to the situation in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States means that it does not provide an altogether adequate reflection of the real problems regarding freedom of the media in the OSCE area. Many of these problems are in fact in the west, and this fact should not be ignored. Perhaps such a geographical distortion is a result of a thematic imbalance in the activities by Ms. Mijatović's Office.

It is encouraging that the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media is showing great interest in efforts to ensure favourable conditions for the work of journalists, in investigations into attacks on them, in changes in the media landscape and in new opportunities connected with the Internet and social networks. However, attention paid to those topics should not be at the expense of work on other problems, without which it is impossible to safeguard democracy, stability and security in the OSCE area.

In particular, we are somewhat surprised that, given the supposed connection between the inspections of certain Russian non-governmental organizations and restrictions on freedom of the media, the Representative still fails to give consideration to legislative initiatives and practical application of the law in countries to the west of Vienna aimed at prosecuting dissent. We have repeatedly spoken about such cases in the Permanent Council. Unfortunately, we have so far received no response from the European Union or its Member States.

I should also like to know more about the Office's activities to implement ministerial decisions on countering intolerance and regarding the dissemination of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic ideas in the media. We should also like to see increased efforts to combat hate speech in the media and the dissemination of radical information, including via the Internet. Particular concern is provoked by the operation of racist, anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant websites in a number of European Union countries, which was much discussed at the OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination held in Tirana in May of this year. Unfortunately, the Representative on Freedom of the Media was not present at that event.

There should be a uniform approach by OSCE countries to new phenomena associated with the development of the Internet. Changes associated with the appearance of new information and communication technologies and current challenges in ensuring freedom of the media would be reflected more adequately if the mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media were updated. We do not entirely understand why an idea essentially aimed at expanding the Representative's scope of activity and by no means restricting it is persistently rejected by some of our partners.

In this context, we are counting on a constructive contribution by the Representative on Freedom of the Media to identifying unifying topics and to developing a uniform understanding of new terms and definitions. A start could be made, for example, with the more careful use of terminology in the Representative's statements, press releases and publications, refraining from the casual use of such concepts as "new media", "social media" or "citizen journalists", and from equating bloggers with professional journalists. These questions were raised during the conference on the Internet in February and at the Warsaw seminar in May of this year. We trust that the recommendations and final documents from these events, which are being prepared by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, will reflect the entire spectrum of views and proposals of the participants and be based on terminology used in OSCE consensus documents.

As regards the part of the report concerned with Russia, we are grateful for the assessment of measures aimed at ensuring journalists' access to information, including the judicial system. We have provided exhaustive clarification regarding all the cases of violence against Russian journalists. There is considerable concern in Russia about these cases and they are treated seriously. They are constantly monitored by the investigative and prosecutorial authorities. We might mention that the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation makes provision for criminal liability for hindering the lawful professional activities of journalists. I should like to inform you that in accordance with the instructions issued by the President of Russia a separate conceptual framework for the protection of journalists and better monitoring of the investigation of such crimes is currently being developed by a number of ministries and departments. This will be a major step in an area that is also of concern to us.

Let me say a few words about the statement we have just heard from the delegation of the United States of America, in which reference was made to Russia. To be honest, we absolutely fail to understand on what grounds the United States assumes the role of mentor, offering its own assessments of other States that do not even have anything to do with what was mentioned Ms. Mijatović's report. This is regrettable given the difficult problems currently rocking American society, especially in the light of the scandal regarding access by the United States intelligence services to the servers of nine major Internet companies to

monitor people's movements and their contacts, including journalists. Evidently, the freedom of the intelligence services to wiretap telephone conversations, open and inspect emails and monitor social networks and Internet traffic is the same freedom in the digital age that our United States colleagues are talking about.

What is involved here is the concrete violation of human rights. It is called a breach of privacy, including electronic correspondence. As such, the United States approach contains double standards. We trust that appropriate clarification will be provided by the United States delegation.

It is our hope that the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, who touched upon these problems in her report, will make a due contribution to finding a sensible balance between ensuring the security of the individual, including in the face of terrorism and organized crime, and freedom of expression.

Thank you for your attention.