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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 994th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 April 2014

**Regarding the suspension of the broadcasting of Russian television
channels in Latvia and Lithuania**

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation surrounding Russian television channels in certain European Union countries is worrying.

Recently, broadcasting of the Russian television channels RTR-Rossiya and RTR-Planeta ceased for three months in Latvia and Lithuania almost simultaneously.

The Latvian National Electronic Mass Media Council justified its decision by arguing that the RTR channel “does not provide reliable and balanced information and that elements of propaganda have been observed in its broadcasts”.

Furthermore, last week the same department began administrative proceedings against the Russian-language First Baltic Channel. The claims are also connected with the fact that for a lengthy period of time the television channel has allegedly been broadcasting tendentious and misleading information that is hostile towards Latvia and is seen in this country as targeted aggression within the information landscape.

In Lithuania, on 2 April the Vilnius district administrative court approved the request of the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania to suspend the broadcasting of RTR-Planeta. The Commission justified its appeal by arguing that the current affairs programme “Vesti nedeli” “provoked inter-ethnic discord and militaristic sentiments in the programme on 2 March devoted to the events in Crimea”.

I might remind you that on 21 March the television channel NTV-Mir ceased broadcasting in Lithuania for three months. It was disconnected for having shown a documentary about the events of January 1991 in Vilnius, the interpretation of which still gives rise to political disputes in Lithuania. Evidently, all versions that differ from the official one are grounds for restriction of freedom of expression and pluralism of the media.

Measures taken in Latvia and Lithuania with respect to Russian television channels are direct violations not only of OSCE commitments with regard to freedom of the media but also of international norms regarding human rights, in accordance with which every individual has the right to freely receive and disseminate information and ideas without any interference on the part of the authorities and regardless of State orders.

We frequently hear from our partners in the European Union the argument that the right to freedom of the media and freedom of expression is a fundamental human right and one of the essential elements of a democratic society. Unfortunately, when this concerns events in their own countries an entirely different approach often prevails.

We are aware that the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, is taking certain measures in this area, but we should like to hear a public response to this restriction of media pluralism and free access to information.

We hope that the aforementioned cases will receive appropriate attention within the OSCE.

Thank you for your attention.