

PC.DEL/1047/14
8 September 2014

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1015th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 September 2014

In response to the report by Major General Michele Torres

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome Major General Michele Torres, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Article IV of the Dayton Peace Accords for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thank him for his detailed report on the work of the office headed by him and the implementation of the arms control regime in the Western Balkans.

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and guarantor of the Dayton Accords, Russia attaches great importance to implementation of the Agreement on Subregional Arms Control signed in Florence in 1996 and regards it as an effective instrument for building confidence and maintaining stability and security in the Western Balkan region.

We share Major General Torres's positive assessment of the course of the implementation of the Agreement. Eighteen years after its entry into force, the verification and arms control process in the Western Balkans is progressing very successfully. The parties are showing goodwill, mutual confidence and a willingness to co-operate with one another, which is very important in a region that only recently experienced a bloody conflict. Thanks to this constructive approach by the sides and the effective assistance of the office of the Personal Representative, the necessary conditions have now been established for the transfer to the sides of the full range of powers for subregional arms control. The willingness to independently implement the provisions of the Florence Agreement once again demonstrates the political maturity of the States in the region and their preparedness to take responsibility themselves for their fate. We believe that the transfer of powers could be fixed in one form or another at the Ministerial Council meeting in Basel.

Russia is willing to continue to provide active support to the regional arms-control efforts of the Balkan countries. We assume that the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre will keep on providing the necessary technical assistance in this process. We are grateful to the Vienna Contact Group for its invitation to us to continue to participate in the high-level meetings of the implementing bodies.

We highly appreciate the contribution by Major General Torres and his small professional team in successfully supporting the subregional arms control regime in the Western Balkans. In many ways it is thanks to his energy and tireless shuttle diplomacy that the transfer of powers is being accomplished successfully.

The work of the office is a very clear example of how much can be done even with modest resources if it focuses on achieving specific aims within a fixed timetable.

Allow me to wish the parties to the Florence Agreement and also Major General Torres and his team continued success in strengthening security and stability in the Western Balkan region.

Thank you for your attention.