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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 980th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 January 2014

**In response to the address by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and
Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,
Mr. Didier Burkhalter**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are genuinely happy to welcome you to this meeting of the Permanent Council. You will be in the “driving seat” of the OSCE at a crucial time. In our opinion, the next two years will be defining for the future fate of the Organization. Will it remain an “irrelevant” instrument, as it is often described today, or will it be capable of playing a substantive role in strengthening the security of the continent and helping to improve people’s lives?

We are impressed by the motto chosen by the Swiss Chairmanship, “Creating a security community for the benefit of everyone”, and for the most part agree with and support the approaches outlined today. We share the opinion that the OSCE is called upon to guarantee the common security of all States and peoples in its space, to serve as a “roof” bringing together the different parts of this space from Vancouver to Vladivostok and to harmonize the processes going on there.

We look forward with the active participation of the Swiss Chairmanship to moving towards our common goal of building an equal and indivisible “security community” and making progress in fulfilling the agreements made at the Summit in Astana in 2010.

We believe that the Helsinki+40 process, which gathered momentum during the Ukrainian Chairmanship, plays a key role in this regard. We trust that in 2014 it will be even further consolidated and will take on concrete ideas that could give the Organization a new aspect after 2015. We are convinced that for the OSCE to be equipped for the future it must transform itself into a fully fledged international organization. To this end there is a need for comprehensive reform aimed in particular at resolving the problem of its legal status, defining the criteria for membership and the geographical framework of the Organization and optimizing the work of its collective bodies and executive structures.

The development of the OSCE must go in a direction that responds to the needs of all participating States. Its role is to bring about the removal of old conflicts and prevent the emergence of new dividing lines. We would warn against efforts to limit its work to monitoring functions. It is not worth wasting time duplicating the work of other multilateral bodies or being absorbed in following up selected United Nations Security Council resolutions or including on the agenda extraneous issues that have nothing to do with our Organization.

We welcome the approach by the Chairmanship of giving priority attention to issues with a unifying potential.

We agree with the need to strengthen confidence in the politico-military dimension in order to safeguard military stability, predictability and transparency. The negotiations on possible parameters for a future conventional arms control regime in Europe must be carried out without any preconditions and unnecessary politicization.

It is important to step up efforts to counter transnational threats, above all terrorism and illicit drug trafficking. We hope that the conferences on these issues planned for this year and the Annual Security Review Conference will produce results. The main aim in the work on information and communication technologies (ICTs) should be to implement the initial set of confidence-building measures in the use of ICTs agreed last year.

We believe that the focus by the Swiss Chairmanship on involving the Organization in the elaboration of measures to improve the preparedness of participating States to prevent natural disasters and reduce the damage caused by them is absolutely justified.

In the second OSCE basket it would be worthwhile to give thought to ways of avoiding getting bogged down in trivia and of giving the activities in the economic sphere a more systematic and strategic character aimed at harmonizing integration processes in the East and West of the continent. An “integration of integration processes” of this kind would provide an economic basis for the future common security community.

We trust that the Swiss Chairmanship, taking account of the accumulated experience, will also be able to balance its work in the human dimension and give due attention to issues of importance to all participating States. We are looking forward to real and not just cosmetic progress in the reform of the third basket.

We consider the subject of preventing torture proposed by you to be a promising one. It is highly topical, as can be seen from yesterday’s reports in the media. In addition, safeguarding social, economic and cultural human rights at a time of financial and economic crisis is important today for all participating States, as is protection of the rights of children. It is important to set about preparing a commemorative Ministerial Council declaration to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in good time.

It would be very useful to find common ground on guaranteeing privacy, on the role of national human rights institutions, on preventing arbitrary detention of prisoners and on combating hate speech in the media, particularly as it is spread by means of information and communication technologies.

As before, we are willing to help the Chairmanship particularly in preparing and holding OSCE human rights events and in its work on important issues such as combating manifestations of aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism, reducing statelessness, safeguarding the rights of national minorities and freedom of movement, preventing trafficking in human beings for the purpose of removing organs, tissues and cells, and also preserving traditional cultural, religious, family and moral values.

There is a need to continue work on bringing order to the election monitoring procedure by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Last year's discussion of the comparative analysis of the election legislation and practice of OSCE participating States raised a number of questions calling for further discussion, hopefully on a system-wide basis.

We are willing to play an active role in discussion on the reform of the work of the OSCE field presences to ensure that their mandates are in line with present-day realities.

We welcome the endeavour of the Swiss Chairmanship to do everything possible to help settle conflicts in the OSCE area, which is one of the priorities of our Organization. This work must be conducted in a status-neutral manner on the basis of the principle of consensus, with account taken of the positions of the parties and in the framework of agreed negotiating formats.

We agree on the priority being given to the task of safeguarding stability in the Balkans. The key issue is the political resolution of the Kosovo problem, which is possible only through dialogue between Belgrade and Priština on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244. As a co-chair of the Minsk Group, we shall continue to actively support a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and the furtherance of the Geneva Discussions on stability and security in the Trans-Caucasus. We emphasize our unstinting support for the work in the "5+2" negotiating format to resolve the Transdniestrian situation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Last year showed that the complex situation in which the OSCE found itself could be dealt with. The key to success is a pragmatic approach oriented towards furthering our unifying agenda and achieving consensus. It is only with this philosophy that the OSCE will get a "second wind" that will help us move closer to the security community that we are all striving towards.

We sincerely wish you and your entire team success in this complex and responsible task.

Thank you for your attention.