

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 950th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 May 2013

**In response to the address by Mr. Goran Svilanović,
Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome to today's Permanent Council meeting, in his new capacity as Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Mr. Goran Svilanović, whom we know well from his work as former Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. We are certain that in your new position, Mr. Svilanović, you will make a tangible contribution to the development of co-operation between your organization and other international and regional structures, including the OSCE.

We listened with interest to your report, which covers in the detail the main challenges facing the Regional Cooperation Council. The ideas set out in the South-East Europe Strategy for 2020 have much in common with the items on the agenda of the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension. In particular, special attention is paid in the Strategy to sustainable development in the region's energy sector and to reducing its impact on the environment. This focus is in keeping with the central theme of this year's OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. All of this is evidence of the existence of good opportunities for co-operation between our two organizations.

We also see prospects for greater collaboration by the RCC with the OSCE Secretariat and field missions in the Balkans as well with regard to capacity-building in terms of dealing with the consequences of natural disasters, including fires, especially as our Organization has some experience in this field.

It is also worth looking into the possibility of involving the Russian-Serbian humanitarian centre in Niš in the implementation of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe. The centre has already proved its usefulness in the region through practical measures: in summer 2012 aircraft from the Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations played an active part in extinguishing forest fires in Serbia and neighbouring countries. A five-year programme to assist Serbia in demining activities has

been implemented, in the course of which more than 3,000 square kilometres of Serbian territory were cleared of unexploded ordnance.

We welcome the efforts of the Regional Coordination Council to strengthen good-neighbourly relations and pool the efforts of the countries of the region in the interests of achieving common strategic goals. We share your position, Mr. Svilanović, as regards the important role of integration initiatives in the search for ways to overcome the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis and to ensure sustainable socio-economic development. In many respects, similar considerations were the catalyst for the establishment of the Common Economic Space and Customs Union of the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, and also for the decision to establish a Eurasian Economic Union in 2015.

More intensive co-operation among the countries of the region on the basis of the principle of good-neighbourly relations is entirely in our interests as well. We see here a chance for Russia's involvement in the implementation of a number of large-scale projects in the interests of the entire region. This might involve, among other things, co-operation in the fuel and energy sector and in the implementation of infrastructure programmes. A concrete example is the creation of the South Stream gas pipeline, with the participation of a number of countries that participate in the RCC, namely Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia.

In conclusion, we should like to associate ourselves with the good wishes expressed by our colleagues to Mr. Svilanović for his continued success in his new post. We hope that the exchange of information and mutually beneficial co-operation between the OSCE and the RCC will only be strengthened in the future.

I wish you every success in this endeavour.

Thank you for your attention.