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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 982<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

30 January 2014

**In response to the address by Mr. Peter Maurer,  
President of the International Committee of the Red Cross**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Maurer,

Thank you for your interesting and informative statement.

I should like first of all to emphasize that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is very highly respected in the Russian Federation, just as it is around the world.

Russia fully supports the fundamental principles of the Red Cross Movement – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary participation, unity and universality – which are, in many ways, synonymous with human rights ideals. This approach helps to achieve mutual understanding, co-operation and lasting peace between peoples.

It is of the utmost importance that the Movement has, over the many decades of its endeavours, managed to avoid entering political, racial, religious or ideological disputes and, in so doing, has retained universal confidence. We believe that the instances of a certain scepticism towards the founding principles of your organization that you mentioned are, most likely, the exception, and not the case for the vast majority of countries. I am sure that most, if not all, in the OSCE share this opinion.

The 150th anniversary of the signing of the first Geneva Convention provides a good opportunity to review the Red Cross's noble mission and to identify new tasks, including developing co-operation with the OSCE.

The foundations for the Russian Red Cross movement were laid back in 1854, when Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna founded an order of Sisters of Mercy in St. Petersburg. In 1867, the Russian Red Cross Society was officially founded by decree of Tsar Alexander II. Since then, it has been developing in various areas, which remain at the heart of this international humanitarian movement. They include helping the casualties of wars and

conflicts, refugees, and the victims of violence, epidemics, and environmental and man-made disasters.

In Russia, as in other OSCE participating States, the humanitarian programmes of the national Red Cross aim to assist in developing health care, education, and social support for the most vulnerable individuals: children from deprived families, homeless and neglected children, orphans, isolated elderly people and veterans, refugees and asylum seekers, people with disabilities and those affected by emergency situations.

We welcome the Red Cross's swift response to current threats and challenges, whether they be flows of migrants from Mediterranean countries or providing support to people living amid frozen conflicts in the OSCE region. The work done by the Red Cross in finding missing persons and re-establishing contact between family members is also extremely important. Our country is very actively involved in this worthy mission.

We fully agree with you that it is a major factor in strengthening peace and stability in the region. Co-operation with the OSCE on this can continue to develop successfully in the future.

The growing trend of politicizing humanitarian missions, which you mentioned, really does give rise to serious concerns. What should stand against this is the Red Cross's innate sympathy, mercy and readiness to help, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, social status or political convictions. This is, perhaps, precisely what we sometimes lack in the OSCE. We believe that it is on this basis that we must share best practice between our organizations.

Thank you for your attention.