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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 974th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 November 2013

**In response to the report by the OSCE Secretary General on gender issues**

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian delegation thanks you for your interesting statement. We have carefully studied the report on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which reflects, among other things, the considerable work undertaken by the Secretariat.

We note that during the period that has elapsed since the Plan's adoption the situation as regards ensuring equality between men and women has improved. It is reassuring that progress is being made in solving the aforementioned problems in the OSCE area, especially in comparison with other parts of the world.

We believe that it is now possible to move to a new stage in the promotion of gender equality and relinquish the concept of so-called positive discrimination of women. On the agenda now is the creation of conditions and prerequisites to ensure that competence and professionalism alone are the factors determining the equal access of men and women to education, employment and participation in public and political life.

We still believe that when assessing the gender situation priority should be given not to the percentage of men or women in a particular structure, but to their real contribution to the work of these structures.

We studied with interest the data regarding the ratio of men and women in the OSCE executive structures. The figures testify to the growing possibilities for employment of women in the Organization. The main thing is that the pursuit of percentages should not become an end in itself. The question is how to ensure that any competition is a real contest in terms of professionalism and competence and not an attempt to artificially level out the gender balance.

This also applies to ensuring equal participation of men and women in public and political life. The frequently proclaimed idea suggesting that as soon as the number of women in executive and legislative structures rises to at least 50 per cent then stability and security

will immediately ensue seems fairly contentious. The important thing is that worthy people, experts and specialists in their field regardless of their sex find their way into politics and the executive structures.

Let me be honest, we fail to understand the efforts within the OSCE to push United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 in its unduly expanded interpretation. We take the position that the leading role in this regard should remain with the United Nations, especially given the absence of armed conflicts in the OSCE area. Instead, it would be worth focusing our energy and resources on resolving other, more obvious issues – for example, issues connected with ensuring social, economic and cultural rights during the financial crisis. We are confident that the OSCE could make a tangible contribution here, especially in the context of the occupational retraining of men and women at a time of rising unemployment, the protection of the rights of single parents and families with many children, and social support for motherhood.

Evidently, it is worth paying greater attention to combating violence not only against women, but also against men. As for domestic or sexual violence, boys and girls suffer to an equal degree.

Next year, we shall mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. It is time to take stock and set new goals.

Ensuring the rights of those women who choose family priorities and the raising of children as their main objective and primary occupation requires particular attention. We should not forget about the special role of women and mothers in preserving traditional family, moral, religious and cultural values either.

Each OSCE participating State has something to share in terms of ensuring equality between men and women. For that reason, the exchange of best practices and the improvement of the mechanisms for sharing experience also remain among our priorities.

As for the proposal to establish a special gender “network”, we would not like to determine ahead of time what mechanisms would be the best for developing inter-State co-operation in this sphere. Time will tell.

We hope that all these problems will be examined at the gender review conference next year and that we shall manage to find common approaches in identifying the goals and tasks for the future.

Thank you for your attention.