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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1019th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 October 2014

On legal action against the Memorial Society

Mr. Chairperson,

In relation to the situation concerning the Memorial Society, I should like to note the following.

The Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation did indeed send a communication to the Supreme Court, demanding that the historical, educational and human rights society known as “Memorial” be shut down on account of the numerous violations committed by the organization.

Complaints about the society’s structure were already lodged at the end of 2012. At that time it was determined, in the course of an audit, that Memorial does not exist as a nationwide organization. Moreover, no documentary evidence that it is conducting activities in accordance with its charter was found. The organization does not have a business account; its co-ordinating and advisory activities are carried out on a voluntary basis; and each structural unit raises project funds independently.

According to the demands from the Ministry of Justice, all local units must be identified in the same way – that is, as regional branches of Memorial. The society has a very complex and convoluted lateral structure: it includes both voluntary associations and individuals, all of whom decide what to call themselves.

In connection with the aforementioned violations, the organization was given the necessary warning, requiring it to correct them by 30 July 2013. Inasmuch as the demands were not met, the Ministry of Justice issued another warning to the human rights organization, but on that occasion, too, its representatives refused to correct the violations.

Today in Russia, and in other countries, there is an international organization called “Memorial”. At the same time, there is a Russian Memorial Society, against which, in particular, the Ministry’s complaints are also lodged. The Russian Memorial Society

includes, as separate legal entities, the Memorial scientific information centre, which deals with historical questions, as well as regional branches and the Memorial human rights centre.

On 19 November 2014, the Memorial Society intends to hold a general assembly to make the necessary corrections to its charter – in other words, as we hope, to put its house in order. This made it possible to postpone the consideration of legal action by the Ministry of Justice against Memorial in the Supreme Court, scheduled for 13 November, until December or January.

We urge our partners, before once again raising the question of violations allegedly taking place in Russia, to first examine the crux of the issue, and at the same time to familiarize themselves with the relevant Russian legislation.