

Delegation of the Russian Federation

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

3 November 2011

**In response to the address by Mr. Petros Efthymiou,
President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

Mr. Chairperson,

It is of course unfortunate that Mr. Efthymiou had to leave the Permanent Council meeting urgently to travel to Athens. We wish him courage and success in dealing with the situation at home in Greece.

Many of the points he made are in keeping with the Russian approach. We also support the strengthening of the OSCE. In that connection, I should like to note the relevance of the annual session of the Parliamentary Assembly, held in Belgrade from 6 to 10 July, which focused on increasing the effectiveness of our Organization. It is encouraging that, as proposed by parliamentarians from several countries including Russia, a number of important provisions on that matter were incorporated into the resolution of the First General Committee of the Assembly. Specifically, it sets the goal of transforming the OSCE into a fully fledged international organization and reflects the view that it is important to continue consultations on strengthening the legal framework of the OSCE and to discuss the possibility of preparing a constituent document. A statement by the heads of the parliamentary delegations of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan on specific aspects of OSCE reform added substantially to the resolution.

We hope that the Parliamentary Assembly will continue to advocate strengthening the OSCE's legal status. The best way to achieve this would be by drawing up a constituent document which, in particular, could also increase the status of the Assembly. We trust that a decision on starting work on preparing this document will be taken at the forthcoming Ministerial Council meeting in Vilnius. We will be submitting a relevant draft decision.

The Assembly could make a substantial contribution towards implementing the key objective approved at the OSCE Summit in Astana to establish a common and indivisible security community free of dividing lines and zones with different levels of security. In that connection, I cannot but mention the important initiatives of the Parliamentary Assembly to examine the new European security architecture. The interesting and constructive discussions

at the special session of the winter meeting of the Assembly on 20 February 2009, where a statement was made by the Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alexander Grushko, have remained in many of our minds.

We trust that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will continue to focus its attention on the most pressing concerns of all the participating States of the Organization. Future Assembly sessions could be given over to such paramount issues as fulfilling the commitments on ensuring freedom of movement and the liberalization of visa regimes, combating extremism and neo-Nazism and resolving the issues of “non-citizenship” in some OSCE countries.

Another matter requiring urgent attention is the absence to date of any harmonized legal basis for the election monitoring activities of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The main issue is to develop standard rules for election monitoring by the Office. The need for substantial improvements in the functioning of the ODIHR’s monitoring missions has deservedly been mentioned by OSCE Parliamentary Assembly representatives, in particular during the winter meeting of the Assembly in February 2011. The matter was also raised in Belgrade. I would stress that the resolution of the Assembly’s Third General Committee calls on the ODIHR to analyse election laws and practices in the participating States with a view to identifying best practice and outlining criteria for objective election observation and assessment.

We believe that the Assembly could play a major role in resolving this matter. In that connection, we are in favour of closer co-operation between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on monitoring electoral processes. I should like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to an important document on this subject recently adopted by the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, a new version of the recommendations for international observers from CIS member countries on observing elections and referendums. This document sums up the experience of the CIS countries in holding and monitoring elections.

Russia has always attached great value to constructive co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and has been in favour of keeping up an active dialogue with the leaders of the Assembly. In that connection, we note with satisfaction that Mr. Efthymiou has already visited Moscow twice, last year and in October this year. The most important subject of the meetings with him was the preparations for the State Duma elections on 4 December. Russia will provide all necessary assistance to the Parliamentary Assembly representatives who will be in Russia to observe the elections.

Thank you for your attention.