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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 969th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 October 2013

Regarding the forthcoming municipal elections in the territory of Kosovo

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to express a few thoughts in connection with the forthcoming municipal elections in Kosovo. We take as our point of departure the need for the participation in these elections of as many voters as possible residing outside Kosovo, including temporarily displaced persons. Another extremely important question is that of ensuring the status-neutral nature of the electoral process, even at the technical level.

We welcome the efforts being made by the OSCE to prepare for the elections. We note the importance of measures, including measures taken by the OSCE, to prevent possible sabotage regarding the registration of Kosovo Serbs.

We call attention to the need for strict measures to prevent possible acts of provocation in the run-up to and during the elections. In that connection, we are in favour of strengthening the police component of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

On a broader level, we take the position that, in accordance with the agreements between Serbia and Kosovo, a Kosovo Force (KFOR) contingent should guarantee the security of the Serbs in the territory. No other formations should be present in the northern districts of the territory. In that connection, all the international presences in the territory should be clearly guided by their mandates and operate in a status-neutral manner.

Thank you for your attention.