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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 955th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 June 2013

**On the administrative proceedings against the non-profit organization
Kostroma Civic Initiatives Support Centre**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to make some comments on the question raised by the delegation of the United States of America regarding the administrative proceedings against the non-profit organization (NPO) Kostroma Civic Initiatives Support Centre.

We have already repeatedly made clear that inspections by the Russian law enforcement authorities are in no way intended to curtail the activity of NPOs funded from abroad. The fact is merely that any organization is required to observe Russian law. NPOs receiving foreign aid are required to register in the appropriate manner.

The foundation in question has confirmed that it received a foreign grant. The court therefore decided that it must register under the law as a recipient of foreign investments.

I should like to emphasize that there is no connection between the investigation of the Kostroma Civic Initiatives Support Centre and the participation of an American diplomat in an event organized by the foundation. In other words, there was nothing in the contribution by the American to prompt intervention by the court. This is a chance coincidence. We regret that our United States colleague devoted his statement to this supposed connection.

The development of civil society is one of the most important priorities of Russian State policy. There are 224,753 non-profit organizations operating successfully in our country. Various mechanisms have been set up for co-operation between federal and regional authorities with public bodies. The State earmarks considerable financial resources to support NPO projects. We expect NPOs to work transparently. The public has a right to know what public organizations do and what both Russian and foreign grants are spent on.

I should like to say right away that planned inspections will also be carried out periodically in future. Irregularities have been brought to light to date in the work of around 100 NPOs. It is up to the court, however, to make final decisions. In the case in point, the court of Kostroma fined the foundation in question 300,000 roubles. A similar decision was

recently handed down in connection with the regional public organization Golos. It cannot be ruled out that other cases will also require consideration by the court authorities. I should also like to recall that these organizations have the right to appeal against such decisions at the next judicial level.

We consider interference in the work of an independent court system to be absolutely unacceptable. The principle of the rule of law and respect for the decisions of independent courts must be inviolable for all OSCE participating States.

Thank you for your attention.