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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 961st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 July 2013

**In response to the address by Mr. Dmitry Mezentsev,
Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome you, distinguished Dmitry Fedorovich, to the meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council. We listened attentively to your detailed and interesting account of the multifaceted activities and main areas of work of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

As the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov emphasized last week with regard to the results of the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the SCO Member States in Kyrgyzstan, Russia holds the work of the SCO in high regard. Our country was one of its founders. During the 12 years of its existence, the SCO has become an integral part of the international architecture of security and co-operation and an important element of the network of inter-State partner associations. It has huge potential. Incidentally, this is demonstrated by the desire of a large number of countries to join the SCO or gain observer status.

We hope that the SCO Secretary-General's participation in today's meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council will be a point of departure for the development of contacts between the two organizations in strengthening a common and indivisible security community from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The reasons for this are quite convincing and were stated clearly in your address.

Above all, countering threats and challenges could become a common sphere for the development of co-operation between the OSCE and the SCO. In this connection, we have taken note of your comment that the SCO considers terrorism, separatism, extremism, illicit drug trafficking, transborder crime and cybercrime to be the main threats. The OSCE is also starting to address many of these problems. We are certain that the OSCE participating States will be interested in the sound normative framework developed within the SCO and the experience of its Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure (RCTS), including implementing an initiative for establishing a universal centre under its auspices to counter the security threats and challenges facing the SCO Member States.

The positions of the two organizations are also close in their definition of potential sources of threats to the common OSCE and SCO space. Like the SCO, the OSCE is concerned about the development of the situation in Afghanistan, especially in view of the imminent withdrawal of foreign troops, which could lead to an increase in threats of terrorism and extremism in the region as well as to an increase in drug trafficking. We note your assessments regarding the development of the situation in Afghanistan and your report on the activities of the SCO in strengthening regional security, which you set out during the discussions at the OSCE Security Days on Afghanistan held at the initiative of Secretary General Lamberto Zannier in March of this year. There is a need for a constant exchange of views of this kind and in general for the strengthening of co-operation among international and regional organizations in relation to Afghanistan.

We welcome the intention of the SCO's leadership to develop external contacts and the desire to broaden its circle of partners among international and regional multilateral associations. This approach is fully in line with the OSCE's policy of expanding contacts and strengthening co-operation between the organizations in its area in the interests of forming a common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community.

The SCO is one of the key pillars for the creation of such a community.

Thank you for your attention.