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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 930th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 November 2012

**In response to the Personal Representatives of the
Chairperson-in-Office for tolerance**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful for the useful information from the Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office on combating various forms of intolerance.

The situation in the OSCE area in this regard confirms the need to retain combating various forms of intolerance as one of our Organization's top priorities. It is particularly worrying that an increase in such unpleasant incidents is becoming more common in countries to the west of Vienna.

Today, not only religious minorities, but even those in the majority are demanding protection and the safeguarding of their rights. According to information from several non-governmental organizations (NGOs), some of which was presented at the most recent OSCE supplementary event on 8 and 9 November 2012, in the last year alone there have been more than 800 manifestations of intolerance towards Christians and defilement of Christian places of worship in Western European countries.

We should also like to draw attention to a problem beyond the borders of the OSCE area, in connection with the situation of Christians in several Middle Eastern and North African States. The intolerance and outbursts of violence largely due to the complex social and political processes in those countries – processes in which some of our OSCE partners also played an active role. Meanwhile the tolerant European society that had actively welcomed the democratic reforms in the Arab countries turned out to be completely unwilling to receive the streams of refugees from those countries who are fleeing for their lives from growing ethnic and religious extremism.

The growth in manifestations of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, which even extremely prosperous countries cannot cope with, is very worrying.

According to human rights organizations, there has been an increase in incidents of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and several other European countries.

Human rights activists estimate that there are over 30 organizations in the United States propagating the theory of an Islamic conspiracy. They also have a budget of the order of 50 million dollars. According to the NGO Collective against Islamophobia, in France in 2011–2012 there were several incidents including profanation of graveyards, arson and defilement of cultural centres and mosques, death threats and desecration of the Koran. The NGO Show Racism the Red Card has noted a significant increase in Islamophobia in the United Kingdom.

The situation with regard to combating anti-Semitism has not improved. According to the Anti-Defamation League, 1,200 anti-Semitic crimes were recorded in the United States in 2011. The number of anti-Semitic incidents in France rose by 40 per cent in the first half of 2012. In July 2012, two French men of Arab origin beat up a Jewish boy on a train from Toulon to Lyon after hearing him mention Jewish names during a telephone conversation. In the Netherlands, half of the reported cases of intolerance on the Internet concern anti-Semitic websites. And these are only a few examples of the depressing figures affecting a significant number of OSCE participating States.

These dangerous tendencies cause particular concern. We should not forget the tragic lessons of the twentieth century, when the international community's failure to respond to the events of the Kristallnacht led to a major tragedy for mankind and millions of innocent victims of Nazism.

In society today, the growth of xenophobia, racist attitudes and manifestations of racial, ethnic and religious intolerance are so intertwined that no effective results can be obtained without a systematic approach to solving these problems. In this context, shaping public opinion is of great significance, with cultivation of tolerance and the ability to objectively assess information in young people who are particularly susceptible to the influence of radical ideologies.

It is unacceptable for government authorities to allow processions and meetings of former members of criminal organizations convicted by the Nuremberg trials, and the glorification of Nazis and their henchmen.

In this context, we share the concern of American congressmen about the reburial in Lithuania of Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis, who in summer 1941 was head of the provisional Lithuanian Government that collaborated with the Nazis. This Government was formed by the Lithuanian Activist Front whose statute declared that when the new Lithuania was established, the Front would swiftly cleanse the Lithuanian nation of Jews, parasites and monsters. The glorification of such persons is an insult to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and undermines efforts to combat anti-Semitism and recognize the crimes of the Nazis and their accomplices.

The OSCE participating States must not only strongly condemn such practices and thoroughly investigate all manifestations of intolerance, but also make joint efforts to develop mechanisms to prevent and halt the dissemination of racist, neo-Nazi attitudes, manifestations of aggressive nationalism and ethnic and religious intolerance. As a contribution to

addressing these issues, Russia is submitting a draft Ministerial Council decision on combating aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism, co-sponsored by Belarus and Kyrgyzstan. It is important that our decisions cover all aspects of combating unpleasant incidents in this regard, including the issues of religious intolerance under discussion today.

In conclusion, we should like to wish the Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office every success in their work.

The full text of our statement will be available on the OSCE intranet.

Thank you for your attention.