

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 950th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 May 2013

**Regarding the imposition of administrative sanctions  
on the Association “Golos”**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to make a number of principled observations in connection with the issue raised by the delegations of Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), the United States of America and Norway regarding the administrative fines pertaining to the Association of Non-Commercial Organizations “for the Defence of the Rights of Voters (Golos)”.

In the first place, we are puzzled by the attempts to draw conclusions from this specific case regarding the alleged “growing pressure on civil society”. I should like to recall that what is involved here is the implementation of Russian legislation concerning the registration procedure for non-commercial organizations which receive funding from foreign sources and which carry out political activities. As the United States ambassador correctly noted, the monitoring of non-commercial organizations does not take place selectively, but in connection with those organizations which receive such financing. It is our right to know what they are doing if they receive money from foreign sources. This provision also applies fully to the Association “Golos”.

According to information provided by the Federal Financial Monitoring Service of the Russian Federation, this non-commercial organization receives foreign financing, and, as such, acts as a foreign agent. At the same time, according to the Ministry of Justice, the Association carries out political activities in our country. However, contrary to the requirements of the Federal Law on Non-Commercial Organizations, the Association has not thus far submitted an application to be included in the register of non-commercial organizations acting as a foreign agent.

On this basis, on 9 April, the Ministry of Justice began administrative proceedings against the Association “Golos” because of its refusal to be registered as a foreign agent. On 25 April, the Presnenskiy District Court in Moscow considered the case and issued a decision imposing administrative sanctions on the Association and assigning a penalty in the form of a fine totalling 300,000 roubles (7,500 euros). Administrative sanctions were also imposed on

the Executive Director of the Association, Liliya Shibanova, who was fined 100,000 roubles (2,500 euros).

We have purposely given such detailed information about this case so that it will be clear to everyone that what is involved here is merely a requirement to comply with the laws of the Russian Federation. Any attempts to inject political opinions into this issue are unacceptable. The principle of the rule of law and of respect for the decisions of independent courts must be inviolable for all OSCE participating States. For this reason, the “concern” expressed in the statement of the European Union over the Presnenskiy Court’s decision and the legal basis for its adoption cannot be understood other than as an attempt to exert pressure on the independent Russian judicial system. What is more, such a policy in essence encourages non-commercial organizations to violate legal norms concerning their activities. This is unacceptable to us.

We profoundly disagree with the assessments of the work of the Association “Golos”, particularly with the view that its activities allegedly “directly support” the implementation of Russia’s international commitments to hold free and fair elections. As regards the relevant commitments within the OSCE, which are contained in the 1990 Copenhagen Document and in numerous decisions of OSCE summits and Ministerial Council meetings, the Russian Federation not only fulfils them but has also, in contrast to certain countries, enshrined them in its electoral laws. The Association “Golos” has no supporting role to play in this regard.

We trust that our partners will stop politicizing the issue of regulating the activities of non-commercial organizations in our country and will show respect for the decisions of the Russian courts. It is strange to hear such statements from the European Union, in many of whose member States hundreds of thousands of people are deprived of the elementary right to vote, as well as the right to take part in referendums.

Thank you for your attention.