

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1042<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF  
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

5 March 2015

**On Zero Discrimination Day**

Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of Belarus and the Russian Federation.

Zero Discrimination Day is still quite a new holiday. However, it does not mean that insufficient attention has been paid by international and regional organizations, including the OSCE, to combating discrimination. On the contrary, the principle of equal treatment and the safeguarding of the rights and freedoms of every member of society have always been a central component of human rights in general and the OSCE human dimension in particular.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without any distinction as to race, gender, language or religion is a common thread running through all OSCE commitments, beginning with the Helsinki Final Act.

Today, the issues of equal treatment and non-discrimination with respect to minorities and with respect to the majority are taking on particular relevance. Ensuring genuine equality and extensive opportunities for exercising individual rights without infringing the rights of other members of society are the keys to the stability and security of any community.

We believe that it is precisely this approach, without the artificial selection of special groups with a greater right to protection from discrimination than other sectors of society, that will enable us in practice to ensure the exercise by all people of their rights and freedoms equally regardless of whether they are the titular nation or an ethnic minority, citizens or non-citizens, permanent residents or migrants, the religious majority or minority, men or women, working adults, children or elderly, journalists or readers.

At the Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana, the participating States underscored the importance of promoting and facilitating intercultural dialogue and partnership aimed at tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, at both the national and the international levels. Our common efforts should be focused on this task with a view ultimately to helping to eliminate discrimination and implement the principle of equal treatment.

Thank you for your attention.