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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 933rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 November 2012

Regarding the entry into force of the law on non-commercial organizations

Mr. Chairperson,

The statements by the delegation of Cyprus on behalf of the European Union and the delegation of the United States of America regarding the amendments to the law on non-commercial organizations (NCOs) that entered into force on 21 November come as a genuine surprise. We commented on this matter three times already in July. Evidently not everyone heard us. We do not believe it necessary to go into detailed explanations again.

I should like merely to underscore once more that the amendments made, which are based on the legislative practice of a number of Western countries, do not prohibit or restrict the receipt of foreign financing by non-commercial organizations. There is no provision for any “penalties” for this. The changes concern only those NCOs that engage in political activities using money from foreign sponsors. According to experts, over the last 20 years around 4 to 5 billion United States dollars have been invested in Russian NCOs from abroad. These financial receipts need to be made more transparent so that society and government bodies know how they are spent. I might add that this measure affects only a few NCOs – around 1,000 out of the more than 230,000 non-commercial organizations.

These NCOs will now receive the status of “foreign agents” from the Ministry of Justice. In this way, the law on NCOs will ensure the necessary transparency and openness regarding the sources of their funding. As we mentioned, if we compare it to the existing content of the laws of quite a number of countries, including the United States, there is nothing new about it.

As for the initiative mentioned by the United States delegation regarding amendments to the legislation regulating the activities of the media in our country, there was indeed such a rumour and it was reprinted in several newspapers. It is true that one deputy famous for his eccentric behaviour attempted to introduce such a draft law. However, it was not approved by his parliamentary group and was withdrawn. It is not being considered by the Russian Parliament. Evidently, our United States colleagues were unaware of this.

Mr. Chairperson,

If we continue in this practice of making completely unfounded criticism of participating States, in particular of our country, and moreover frequently on the basis of unverified rumours, we could take it a very long way. It should be understood by everyone, one would think, that under such circumstances it will be difficult to expect to reach any kind of joint understandings let alone decisions on the human rights component of the OSCE's work.

At the same time, we take the position that changes to the legislation in any sovereign OSCE participating State are the prerogative of its legislative authorities, and attempts at external interference in this process are inadmissible.

Thank you for your attention.