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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 969th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 October 2013

**In response to the statement by Mr. Ranko Krivokapić,
President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Krivokapić,

It is a pleasure for us to welcome Mr. Krivokapić, who has recently assumed the exacting responsibilities of the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), to this meeting of the Permanent Council. We listened with interest to his evaluation of the key areas of the work of the PA. We consider that the existing instruments at the disposal of the PA, including procedural instruments, are fully sufficient for the effective performance of its tasks.

Russia attaches great importance to the Assembly's work. This is borne out by the active participation of the delegation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in all its activities.

We are convinced that the parliamentarians of our countries can make a substantial contribution to efforts to establish a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community from Vancouver to Vladivostok. It would be important for the PA also to take an active part in formulating a unifying agenda for the OSCE, concentrated on the most urgent common problems and the quest for mutually acceptable ways of solving them. We welcome the constructive discussions in which the parliamentarians are engaged in the context of the Helsinki+40 process.

We note that the PA, justifiably, is paying increased attention in its work to transnational threats – combating terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration and trafficking in human beings.

The autumn session of the PA which recently took place in Budva demonstrated the growing significance of the southern Mediterranean region. Instability and unpredictability in the situation in North Africa and the Middle East entail increasing risks for the whole OSCE area. Closer co-operation should therefore be developed with the Mediterranean Partners on the whole spectrum of common challenges.

A common response is needed to the phenomenon of aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism and the glorification of former SS members and their accomplices. It is time to work in real earnest on a solution of the problem of “non-citizens” in a number of OSCE participating States. Parliamentarians can play an active role in promoting progress towards guaranteeing freedom of movement and the liberalization of visa regimes.

Mr. Chairperson,

We trust that renewed co-operation between the PA and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) will contribute to greater objectivity and improved quality in the work of observers. In reality, the problem lies not in the work of short-term observers but rather in the way those in charge of missions interact among themselves and with other players in this field.

A striking example of the peculiar nature of the ODIHR’s methodology is the divergence in the assessments of the elections held recently in Azerbaijan. It is clearly time seriously to consider the formulation of uniform, clearly understandable and transparent rules and principles, acceptable to all, for the observation of elections.

After today’s meeting here, there will be a presentation in the Hofburg entitled “A comparative analysis of electoral legislation and practices in the OSCE participating States”. We appeal to all delegations to take an active part in this event. We hope that it will contribute to promoting our dialogue on election issues. I am convinced that the results will be interesting also for the parliamentarians of the OSCE countries.

In conclusion, I should like to wish Mr. Krivokapić success in his post, in the interests of strengthening the unifying principles of the Assembly and enhancing its authority.

Thank you for your attention.