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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

Regarding the elections in the United States of America

Mr. Chairperson,

As we notified you at the last meeting of the Permanent Council, we should like to touch on the topic of the general elections held in the United States of America on 6 November.

Russia carefully followed this election campaign, which remained tense until the very end of the voting process. The fact that Barack Obama, who has done much for the development of relations between our countries over the past four years, was re-elected President of the United States for another term creates favourable conditions for the expansion of bilateral co-operation. An interest in the ongoing development of bilateral relations in all areas, including the economic component, was confirmed during a recent telephone conversation between the leaders of Russia and the United States.

At the same time, the elections once again demonstrated that the United States electoral system, which was established two centuries ago, is in many respects archaic and falls short of modern democratic standards. This was borne out, in particular, by the preliminary conclusions of the mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the assessments of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's observers as well as by the Russian observers, who were present in the country as members of various missions.

With respect to ensuring the voting rights of United States citizens, it was noted that paragraphs 7.3 and 24 of the 1990 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE are not being implemented.

The ODIHR observers urge the United States authorities to take specific steps to improve the electoral process, in areas such as voting rights, the accuracy of voter lists, campaign finance transparency, recount procedures and access of international observers to polling stations.

The last finding is cause for particular concern. The ODIHR observation mission rightly characterized this situation as being contrary to paragraph 8 of the 1990 CSCE Copenhagen Document.

The critical assessments contained in the ODIHR mission's conclusions have much in common with the observations of the representatives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The parliamentarians drew particular attention to the problems of ensuring transparency and monitoring the financing of the election campaign, something that, in their opinion, created unequal conditions in the electoral contest. The lack of information concerning the sponsorship of advertisements also came in for criticism from the parliamentarians, who found it undermined the transparency and accountability of the elections.

To put it another way, the United States electoral system is a long way off the benchmark it is presented as by some of our partners who readily criticize many other countries for their shortcomings in the development of democracy while preferring not to comment on their own evident defects. It is for this reason that Russia is pressing for a detailed analysis of the implementation by all participating States of their OSCE commitments regarding elections.

It is clear that the number of irregularities identified during the election campaign in the United States would have been greater if there had been full-scale rather than limited monitoring there by the ODIHR. This once again confirms the need for substantial improvement in the Office's current methodology and for the drawing up of common rules for election observation, including rules concerning the monitoring format.

Thank you for your attention.