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

24 November 2011

**In response to the statement by the United States of America**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful to Ms. Dunja Mijatović and the representatives of the European Union and the United States of America for their positive assessment of the recent decision by the State Duma of Russia to amend the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation by decriminalizing defamation and tightening punishment for obstructing the legal pursuit by journalists of their work. This is an important step towards the attainment by Russia of the highest international standards in the defence of freedom of speech.

We should also like to draw attention to the decision of the lower chamber of the Federal Assembly as the first step towards the legal passage of these amendments. Pursuant to the law the amendments must still be agreed upon in the Federation Council and approved by the President of the Russian Federation.

Thank you for your attention.