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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 992<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 March 2014

**Regarding the policy of Latvia on education in the Russian language**

Mr. Chairperson,

Safeguarding the rights of national minorities should remain one of our Organization's top priorities in the human dimension. There is no doubt that the successful resolution of the problems connected with the integration of national minorities contributes in many respects to ensuring stability and security throughout the OSCE area. We have developed a large set of commitments in this regard which, specifically, provide for the creation of favourable conditions for educating national minorities in their mother tongue.

Unfortunately, a number of OSCE States have a deliberate policy of removing national minority languages from the educational landscape. We are forced to note that the lack of a clear and consistent position on this issue on the part of the specialized OSCE institutions does not aid matters.

In this regard, we are alarmed by the information received from human rights non-governmental organizations that the Latvian Government intends to abolish the Russian-language stream of the educational process in national minority schools by 2018 and switch to instruction in Latvian.

We should like the Latvian delegation to provide us with an explanation in this regard. In particular, we wish to know whether and to what extent it is planned to retain instruction in the mother tongue of national minorities in primary and secondary schools. We should also like to know how the Latvian Government intends to ensure that it meets the relevant OSCE commitments and whether a dialogue is under way with representatives of the Russian-speaking minority.

We hope that the lessons drawn from hasty decisions that led to the serious exacerbation of inter-ethnic tensions in one OSCE country will further encourage the Latvian authorities to fully consider the interests of national minorities and to take the necessary steps to maintain stability and inter-ethnic harmony in society.

Thank you for your attention.