

Delegation of the Russian Federation

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

1 September 2011

Regarding the presidential elections in Abkhazia

Mr. Chairperson,

We have studied the assessments of the elections held in the Republic of Abkhazia. They are not surprising. It is clear that the comments expressed by the representatives of the European Union, the United States of America and Georgia are based on their view of the situation. Along these same lines we might also mention the statement on this matter by the Secretary General of NATO, Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

Our view of what is happening in Abkhazia is a different one. Abkhazia is building its statehood on the basis of democratic principles and values. These elections marked an important stage in that process. Numerous observers from various countries and international organizations, in particular the European Parliament and also the European Centre for Geopolitical Analysis with its headquarters in Szczecin, Poland, commended the electoral process in Abkhazia for its conformity with democratic standards. These elections were contested by three candidates who conducted serious election campaigns in accordance with the national laws and had roughly equal chances of being elected. During the elections themselves no serious violations that might have prevented the electorate from freely expressing its will were observed by the monitors. As it turns out, the elections were won by vice president Alyaksandr Ankvab, for whom a large proportion of the electorate voted. All this is evidence of the positive and genuinely democratic traditions that are taking shape in Abkhazia.

The President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Dmitry Medvedev, has congratulated the newly elected President of Abkhazia. He expressed the firm belief that the country “will continue the gradual process of improving the institutions of power and civil society, ensuring stable socio-economic development and strengthening its position in the international arena”.

We believe that the elections held in Abkhazia marked an important stage in the development of that country’s statehood and civil society and have thus made a positive contribution to the strengthening of stability and security in this volatile part of the Trans-Caucasus. The outcome of the elections will have no impact whatsoever on the next round of the Geneva Discussions planned for early October.

Thank you for your attention.