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

22 December 2011

**In response to the statements by the European Union and the
United States of America regarding the murder of Mr. G. Kamalov**

Mr. Chairperson,

We take note of the concern expressed by our partners in connection with the recent tragic event involving the murder of Mr. G. Kamalov, the founder of the Dagestan weekly Chernovik. In that connection, we should like to make the following comment.

A criminal investigation into this event has been launched under the articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation dealing with “Murder” and “Illegal trafficking in weapons”. At the present time, the competent agencies are fully engaged in carrying out measures to track down the person or persons responsible and are also implementing investigative measures regarding the case of Mr. Kamalov. One of the most commonly held views is that this killing was carried out in connection with Mr. Kamalov’s professional activities and his active approach to life. Specifically, he was a member of the Economic Council under the President of Dagestan. For people who know the Caucasus this fact by itself says much. The head of the Republic of Dagestan has taken the investigation of this crime under his personal supervision.

I should like to draw the attention of my esteemed colleagues to the fact that the question they have raised here today lies exclusively within the competence of the Russian law enforcement agencies, which are taking all the necessary measures to uncover the facts surrounding this crime. In that connection, we call on our OSCE partners to refrain from hasty conclusions and assessments regarding this matter until all the procedures called for under the law have been completed.

We are grateful for the continued high level of interest on the part of our United States colleagues in matters having to do with the bringing to justice of persons responsible for the murder of journalists. At the same time, however, we are following with no less interest the steps being taken in this connection by the United States itself.

According to data supplied by non-governmental organizations active in the area of human rights (for example, the Committee to Protect Journalists and the Brussels Tribunal),

since 2003 no less than 16 journalists have perished in Iraq at the hands of United States service personnel. Included in this number is Jose Couso, a cameraman working for the Spanish radio and television corporation Telecino, the Reuters cameramen Taras Protsyuk and Mazen Dana, and the Reuters sound engineer Waleed Khaled. One of the most recent victims was the editor of the Iraqi television company Beladi-TV, Hadil Emad. She was shot to death on 1 January 2009 at a checkpoint in Iraq.

The Reuters photographer Namir Noor-Eldeen was killed in Baghdad in 2007. As you may be aware, a video recording of that event was posted on the WikiLeaks site.

We should be grateful to our United States colleagues if they were to inform the Permanent Council at one of the next meetings as to whether the investigations into these events have been completed and the guilty parties brought to justice.

Permit me a few words about the subject of media freedom that has been raised today, this time however in the context of the European Union. We should like to take this opportunity to request our colleagues from the European Union to explain the following facts. The Syrian television channel Cham Press and the newspaper Al-Watan have been included in the European Union's "blacklist" with a reference to "participation in a campaign to spread disinformation and to incite violence against demonstrators". Earlier, as you will be aware, EU sanctions were imposed on ad-Dunya, the first private satellite channel in Syria. We should appreciate information on the reasons for the introduction of sanctions and restrictions on these media outlets.

I should like to draw attention to the fact that the punitive sanctions being applied against a number of media in countries to the east of Vienna have always been regarded by the European Union as an attack on freedom of the press. As far as the Syrian media are concerned, it is clearly a case of the use of economic levers of pressure. Is this not also a limitation of freedom to act?

We are convinced that Ms. Dunya Mijatović, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, is following up on all these questions. We await with impatience clarification on these matters from her and from our colleagues.

Thank you for your attention.