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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 983rd MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 February 2014

**Regarding freedom of the media**

Mr. Chairperson,

The argument that freedom of the media and freedom of expression are a basic human right and an essential element of democratic society is heard constantly at various international forums, including the OSCE. We have repeatedly heard our colleagues, including representatives of the European Union (EU), call for media pluralism, free access to information and the protection of journalists to be safeguarded.

Nevertheless, as experience has shown, the EU takes an extremely selective approach to these commitments when they are on home turf. We have repeatedly spoken at Permanent Council meetings of instances of double standards with respect to freedom of the media.

The recent case involving the restriction of the rights of Russian journalists by EU representatives is yet another example of the selective approach in fulfilling international commitments and choosing representatives of the media according to their political loyalties.

On 29 January in Kyiv, despite their having requested to attend ahead of time, Russian journalists were refused entry to a media briefing held by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Catherine Ashton.

The explanations from Ms. Ashton's press secretary obtained through diplomatic channels, arguing that this was merely due to "logistics and security difficulties", can hardly be considered satisfactory.

All things considered, the comment by an official representative of the EU delegation in Kyiv that "the briefing had been by invitation only, in a limited format" and that the media had been invited "at our own discretion" is far closer to the real motives behind this decision, especially since according to journalists of Western and Ukrainian media who were present at the briefing, they were prevented from sharing information with colleagues regarding the location of Ms. Ashton's meeting with the press.

We believe that a situation in which the Russian public is deprived of the opportunity to gain first-hand information about EU assessments of the events in Ukraine contravenes OSCE commitments to ensure access to information and is not in keeping with the principle of freedom of the media so actively proclaimed by Brussels.

We also cannot understand why the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has not commented on this matter. We should like to have her opinion on this question.

Thank you for your attention.