

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1053rd MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 May 2015

On the International Day of Families

Mr. Chairperson,

On 15 May, the International Day of Families, proclaimed by a United Nations General Assembly resolution in 1993 with a view to drawing the international community's attention to the multiple problems of the family, was observed.

Each year, as a rule, a priority theme is announced and various events are devoted to it. In different years, such pressing questions have included "Promoting social integration and intergenerational solidarity", "Ensuring a balance between work and fulfilling family responsibilities for the good of families and society as a whole", "Solving the problems of low-income families and problems relating to social isolation" and "Families and disabled persons". This year, the International Day of Families celebration is aimed at helping to ensure gender equality and to protect children's rights within families.

As the basic nucleus of society, the family has been and will remain the guardian of human values, culture and historical continuity between generations, as well as a factor of stability and development. The family is where a child's development as a person and a citizen takes place. The family is the source of love, respect, solidarity and loyalty – the foundation of any civilized society. The well-being of the family is the measure of a country's development and progress.

Regrettably, in a number of OSCE participating States in recent years, a worrying tendency towards the breakdown of the family as an institution, and disregard of the cumulative cultural, religious and moral values of civilizations, have become ever more apparent. The newfangled concepts of the institution of the family, which, in essence, not only contradict human nature, but violate basic norms of morality and decency, pose special danger. What is more, these concepts are often promoted in the guise of respect for freedom of expression, and those who disagree with them – and they are the majority – are accused of intolerance.

In Russia, the strengthening of the family as an institution, the creation of conditions for an increase in the birth rate, and the protection of motherhood and childhood are the priority areas for social policy. In August 2014, the State Family Policy Framework for the period up to 2025 was approved by order of the Government of the Russian Federation. Its main goals are support, strengthening and protection of the family and the values of family life, and enhancing the quality of life for families.

Special attention is paid to developing a social support system for families, including the payment of allowances for the birth of a child, paid leave to care for a child up to 18 months of age and leave without pay for up to three years. The payment of subsidies to families with two or more children, which can be used for the children's education or to improve the families' housing conditions, has been an effective measure (5.759 million certificates have been issued).

Women have access to vocational training, retraining and skills development while they are on leave to care for a child up to three years of age. One innovation is the provision of State aid on the basis of a social contract. Such a contract is concluded with low-income citizens, including families with children, who are trying to climb out of poverty. In such cases, material aid is provided to them.

A set of measures aimed at improving the demographic situation is leading to positive results. The number of children born in Russia grew 28 per cent in 2013 compared to 2006. In terms of the total fertility rate (1.71 in 2013), Russia outstrips such countries as Austria (1.4), Bulgaria (1.5), Germany (1.4), Greece (1.4) and Spain (1.4).

The observance of the International Day of Families is an excellent occasion to draw attention to the problems facing families in OSCE participating States and to questions concerning the protection of family life. We call upon the current Serbian Chairmanship and the future German Chairmanship to ensure that consideration of the implementation of OSCE commitments as regards the questions of reuniting families and ensuring the right of parents to bring up their children in accordance with their convictions, as well as protecting family life, are reflected in the Organization's agenda, as appropriate. In view of the 2015 priority announced by the United Nations of ensuring equal opportunities within the family and protecting children, it would be worthwhile to think about conducting relevant thematic events within the OSCE. Such events could include sharing experience in solving economic, social and cultural problems with regard to providing support for the family, taking the interests of children into account.

Thank you for your attention.