

PC.DEL/828/11
2 September 2011

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

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 holding of elections to the State Duma on 4 December 2011

Mr. Chairperson,
Esteemed colleagues,

I should like to inform you that on 29 August Dmitry Medvedev, President of Russia, signed a decree scheduling for 4 December of this year the holding of elections of deputies to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation for the next legislative period. That document was signed during a meeting between the Head of State and the leaders of the seven political parties registered in Russia, at which there was a discussion of issues relating to the preparations for and holding of these elections.

It is the wish of the Russian leadership that the composition of the future State Duma should represent as closely as possible the political preferences of the widest possible range of Russian citizens and the diversity of their views, positions and interests. The forthcoming elections will to a considerable degree be held in accordance with revised rules. Recently, substantial amendments have been made to the legislative instruments regulating various aspects of the electoral process with a view to improving the voting procedure and bringing it into line with best international practices designed to ensure a fair representation in the nation's parliament. As part of this process, the ideas and comments put forward by the different political parties have been taken into account.

In specific terms, we are referring here to the following innovations. For example, the term of office for deputies to the State Duma has been increased to five years. For non-parliamentary parties, the number of signatures required for the registration of candidate lists has been reduced from 200,000 to 150,000. Parties that receive more than five per cent of the votes cast will be entitled to seats in the Duma. There is provision for greater responsibility for violations involving the use of absentee ballots at the same time that a more systematic procedure has been introduced for early voting and voting outside polling stations.

It should also be noted that the parties currently represented in Parliament enjoy equal access to State radio and television media. Those parties that have failed to receive the minimum required number of votes have been given the right to speak in the State Duma and

before the legislative assemblies of the republics and territories of the Russian Federation on key issues having to do with national development.

The updating of the software at electoral commissions at all levels is continuing. Specifically, it is planned that by 4 December modern electronic voting and ballot processing systems will have been installed at approximately 5,000 polling stations across the country.

Accordingly, our country is well prepared for the holding of these elections. We intend to continue to provide information on the election campaign in Russia, including information on matters pertaining to the issuance of invitations to foreign election observers.

Thank you for your attention.