

PC.DEL/647/13
5 July 2013

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 959th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 July 2013

**Regarding the anti-discrimination legislation in the
United States of America**

Mr. Chairperson,

The United States Supreme Court has abolished a key provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Act – one of the principal anti-discrimination legislative instruments in the United States. In accordance with that provision, states in which the African American population was previously subjected to discrimination were obliged to clear any changes to the voting procedure with the Federal Government.

It is encouraging that the United States Supreme Court agreed with the plaintiff's view that "racism and discrimination are relics of the past and therefore the African American population no longer requires this kind of legal support". It seems that today, on Independence Day – a national holiday for the United States, one can only congratulate our American colleagues on such an assessment by the highest legal authority in the country.

At the same time, we should also like to believe that no new opportunities for procedural loopholes allowing the rights of minorities or certain groups to be restricted in the absence of control by the federal authorities will appear in the United States voting law, which is in any case extremely complicated, as was noted, in particular, in the final report by the mission sent by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to observe the general election on 6 November 2012. One such example would be manipulation by carving up electoral districts. In view of the chronic serious problems regarding access by international observers, including those from the ODIHR, to monitor the election campaign and voting procedure in the United States, the new legal situation serves as an additional reminder of the misgivings already voiced repeatedly in the OSCE regarding the practical exercise in the United States of electoral rights, including those of minorities.

In this context, President Obama's assessment, calling the aforementioned decision of the Supreme Court a "step backwards", attracts attention.

We hope that the United States authorities will ensure in full accordance with their OSCE commitments “universal and equal suffrage” (as provided for in the Copenhagen Document 1990), exercised “without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (Vienna Document 1989).

Thank you for your attention.