

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 imposition of administrative sanctions on the
“Golos” Association**

Mr. Chairperson,

We explained the situation regarding the Association of Non-Commercial Organizations “for the Defence of the Rights of Voters (Golos)” in detail at the Permanent Council meeting on 2 May.

The Basmanniy District Court in Moscow handed down its decision regarding this non-commercial organization on 4 June 2013 on the basis of the results of an inspection. According to the Russian Federal Financial Monitoring Service, this non-commercial organization received foreign funding amounting to 4 million roubles (approximately 100,000 euros) in December 2012. Considering that this organization is carrying out political activities in our country, the court held that this non-commercial organization had violated current legislation and imposed an administrative fine on it.

I remind you that the payment of a fine does not release an organization from the obligation to do what is required of it by law, that is, to file an application to be included in the register of non-commercial organizations acting as a foreign agent. Since the “Golos” Association failed to file such an application, the Russian Ministry of Justice suspended the operations of this non-commercial organization for six months on 25 June.

It goes without saying that the “Golos” Association may make use of its right to appeal to the court against the decision of the Ministry of Justice. Another alternative is for it to be included in the register and continue its activities. There are already precedents for this. On 27 June, the Russian Ministry of Justice approved an application for the inclusion of the non-commercial partnership “Supporting Competition in CIS Countries” in the register of non-commercial organizations acting as a foreign agent.

However, judging by the information reported in the media, the “Golos” Association has decided to continue to boycott this law, to liquidate its organization and to establish a new one based on it. That is its choice.

As for the references to some kind of historic role played by “Golos” in the Russian elections, we also spoke about this in our statement in May. We shall have to repeat ourselves. As regards the relevant OSCE commitments contained in the 1990 Copenhagen Document and in numerous decisions of OSCE Summits and Ministerial Council meetings, the Russian Federation not only fulfils them but has also, in contrast to certain countries, enshrined them in its electoral laws. The “Golos” Association has no supporting role to play in this regard. As far as the observation of the municipal elections in Moscow are concerned, you can be in no doubt that we have an active civil society. There are hundreds of observers who will ensure that the electoral processes are monitored.

As far as the topic of elections touched on by our colleagues is concerned, we would consider it useful to ask the European Union for clarification again, given that in a number of EU Member States hundreds of thousands of people are deprived of the most basic voting rights and even of the right to participate in referendums. People who have lived in Latvia all their life are deprived of that right, which any citizen of the European Union has, even if they arrived in a country three months ago. So while it is normal to tax non-citizens, it is utterly impossible to allow them to vote for the head of the village council. Thomas Jefferson himself said that taxation without representation is the worst form of tyranny.

We should also like to ask the distinguished representatives of the European Union how the EU intends to implement the principle of equal representation in the European Parliament for the residents of Latvia and Estonia. At present the quota for the number of Members of the European Parliament is calculated on the basis of the total population (including “non-citizens”), yet only Latvian and Estonian citizens participate in the elections for the European Parliament. And how does all this fit in with those *acquis* the European Union talks about so frequently at the meetings of the Permanent Council?

This is not the first time we have raised these matters, but we have not as yet received a single intelligible explanation. We do not wish our discussion to turn into a kind of monologue, and should like to hear answers from the European Union to our concerns at last. Otherwise we shall be compelled to reserve the same right not to respond to the European Union’s comments.

Thank you for your attention.