



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

PC.DEL/907/21
11 June 2021

ENGLISH only

STATEMENT ON THE SHRINKING SPACE FOR
CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henning Hj. Johansen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 10 June 2021

Madame Chair,

We are deeply concerned about the shrinking space for opposition and independent voices in Russia.

4 June a new law was signed, banning anyone with links to so-called “extremist organisations” from running in elections in Russia. Last night a court ruled to recognize Aleksey Navalny’s political organization as extremist under this law. This is an attack on every Russian citizens’ fundamental democratic rights. Combined with the existing laws on so-called “foreign agents” and “undesirable organisations”, critical and independent voices within the opposition, civil society and independent media are effectively silenced. It reveals a systematic campaign against democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, severely limiting political pluralism in Russia ahead of this year’s local and parliamentary elections.

Last week Andrey Pivovarov, former executive director of “Open Russia”, was detained as he was about to fly out of Pulkovo airport. He is currently being held in custody for alleged violations of the law on so-called “undesirable organisations”.

The following day, Dmitry Gudkov, a politician and former member of the State Duma, was detained in Moscow and kept in custody for two days. After release he fled the country.

These are only some of numerous examples of the unprecedented pressure and intensified judicial persecution of members of the political opposition that we have witnessed in recent weeks. A number of activists and members of the opposition have endured house searches, been put under house arrest, fled the country or been jailed on grounds that clearly appear to be politically motivated.

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

We call on the Russian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Mr Pivovarov, Aleksey Navalny and the many other opposition activists and human rights defenders currently in jail. We reiterate our call on Russia to protect the fundamental freedoms of its citizens and live up to the international obligations the country has signed up to.

Thank you