



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1035 Vienna, 22 January 2014

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#### **EU Statement on Human Rights Developments in the Russian Federation**

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In recent weeks the European Union has observed a number of further worrying developments in relation to the human rights situation in the Russian Federation, particularly in relation to the rule of law and the enjoyment of the freedoms of association and peaceful assembly.

On 30 December guilty verdicts were delivered by the Zamoskvoretsky Court against Alexey Navalny and his brother Oleg. The charges against both individuals were not substantiated during the trial and appear to have been politically motivated. With the exception of a few selected representatives of the media, no public and international observers were allowed into the court building for the reading of the verdict. Many people who sought to peacefully demonstrate against the verdicts were restricted from doing so and a number of individuals at different demonstrations were detained. Alexey Navalny has also been the subject of ongoing harassment by the authorities, who have blocked his website, raided the offices of his anti-corruption foundation and summoned him for further questioning.

The EU is also concerned at the latest decision by the Russian Ministry of Justice on 25 December to place the Sakharov Centre, the “Committee against Torture” as well as regional NGOs, in the so-called “Foreign Agents Registry.” With this the number of Russian NGOs labelled as “foreign agents” has increased to a total of thirty-four.

These developments reinforce our concerns about the broader state of fundamental freedoms of association, assembly and expression in Russia, as well as the rule of law. We wish to stress the importance of judicial decisions that are free from political interference, independent, and in full compliance with the rule of

law. We also call on the Russian government to suspend the practice of branding Russian NGOs as “foreign agents”, comply with its international human rights obligations, including its OSCE commitments, and apply relevant international legal standards pertaining to the rule of law.

The OSCE Institutions possess valuable expertise on all of these issues, which participating States can draw on. The events planned in the human dimension in 2015 by the Serbian Chairmanship also provide an excellent opportunity for all participating States to discuss how we can strengthen our OSCE commitments on these issues, as well as better implement them. We look forward to a constructive discussion with the Russian Federation and other OSCE partners in the coming months.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO\*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA\*, the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.