

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 589
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EU Statement on the enactment of the Russian Law on Non-profit Organisations

1. The EU would like to draw attention to the Statement of 19 January 2006 made by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the enactment of the Russian Law on Non-profit Organisations.

“The EU has made clear to the Russian Federation its concerns over the possible effects of the draft law on NGOs. It has also underlined the great importance the EU attaches to freedom of expression and association, which are of fundamental importance for a democratic society. The EU reiterates its strong support for the legitimate and peaceful activities of civil society. It is in Russia's interests that civil society should be allowed to develop freely.

The EU welcomes changes made to the draft law before its second reading, but remains concerned that the law as it has been adopted could have a serious impact on the legitimate activity of civil society organisations in Russia.

The EU will pay close attention to the implementation of the law when it passes into force and expresses its expectation that it will be implemented in line with standards and commitments undertaken in the framework of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.”

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

*Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process