



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1015 Vienna, 4 September 2014

EU Statement on the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association in the Russian Federation

The European Union remains concerned about ongoing restrictions on the enjoyment of the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association in the Russian Federation.

The conviction on 24 July and 18 August 2014 by Moscow Courts of activists involved in the Bolotnaya Square events of 6 May 2012 is disproportionate in light of the nature of the events and the offences these activists were accused of.

Freedom of Association in the Russian Federation continues to be undermined. We have continuously expressed our concern about legislation requiring non-governmental organisations receiving foreign funding and allegedly engaged in -unclearly defined- “political activities” to register as “foreign agents”. Subsequent legislation giving power to the Ministry of Justice to designate NGOs as such enabled the Ministry to add – against their will – 12 NGOs on its “foreign agents” list since June. Most recently the Freedom of Information Foundation and the St Petersburg branch of the Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers were included.

These developments further restrict and weaken the voices of independent civil society and contribute to a chilling effect on the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms. We urge the Russian government to ensure that legislation and its implementation conforms to international human rights standards including OSCE commitments.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, and 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.