



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on Domestic Violence in the Russian Federation

The European Union and its Member States share the concern expressed by our distinguished colleague from the US. We have many commitments, going back many years, on combating domestic violence in all its forms. Indeed, it was in Moscow, in 1991 that participating States agreed to “seek to eliminate all forms of violence against women”. We recall the conference on Violence Against Women – Bringing Security Home which took place in Hofburg on 22 July 2016, and the joint OSCE-UN Symposium on combating Femicide, which also took place here in November, where participants stressed the need and identified ways to combat violence against women in all its forms. We also recall our statement on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in December last year

We believe we must speak out now about proposed legislation in Russia that would decriminalise domestic violence: reducing ‘battery within the family’ from a criminal to an administrative offence, with weaker sanctions for offenders. We note that this legislation has not yet been signed into law. We are raising this issue now given the seriousness of the matter and in the sincere hope that those responsible might consider the full implications of this action.

No country is immune from domestic violence which claims so many victims each year all across the OSCE region. It is true within the Member States of the European Union as it is elsewhere. We therefore call on the Russian Delegation to relay our concerns that this legislation, if adopted, would be a retrograde step, which would send the wrong message about the Russian authorities’ commitment to tackling violence against women and children.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members 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.