



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1354 Vienna, 10 February 2022

#### **EU Statement on the deteriorating human rights situation in the Russian Federation**

1. The European Union is deeply concerned that the Russian authorities continue to restrict the work of Russian independent media outlets, and of individual journalists and other media workers and to hinder the work of human rights defenders, thus confirming a negative pattern of a systematic crackdown on the human rights and freedoms that are enshrined in the Russian constitution. Attacks and undue restrictions - both online and offline - that target journalists, other media actors and human rights defenders, are both a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and a threat against our common security.
2. The Russian authorities recently decided to ban the German public international broadcaster *Deutsche Welle* from broadcasting in Russia, to revoke the accreditation of its employees, to initiate the procedure to designate it as a "foreign agent", and to close its office in Moscow. We expect the authorities of the Russian Federation to revoke the above decisions.
3. In addition, the state media regulator *Roskomnadzor* requested Russian news outlets to remove previously published news stories with references to anti-corruption investigations by the opposition politician Alexei Navalny and his network. On 20 December 2021, a court in the Moscow region ruled to restrict access to the website of OVD-Info, an independent media and human rights advocacy project. These steps add to our concerns about the continued attempts to shrink the space for civil society, critical voices, and independent media in the country, including through the "foreign agent" law.
4. We express our deep concern about the abduction of Zarema Musaeva, mother of a Chechen lawyer and anti-torture activist Abubakar Yangulbaev, a

death threat made by a high ranking Russian politician against his family members, as well as about threats made by the head of the Chechen Republic against media outlets TV Dozhd and Novaya Gazeta, Novaya Gazeta's correspondent Elena Milashina, and the founder of the Committee Against Torture, Igor Kalyapin.

5. We stand in solidarity with those speaking up for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Russia and elsewhere. Along with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, we call on the Russian authorities to reconsider their approach and ensure that journalists and media actors can continue fulfilling their important societal role. We also call on Russia to fully implement all OSCE commitments and international obligations related to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, and ALBANIA\*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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