



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1268 Vienna, 21 May 2020

EU Statement on the case of Yuri Dmitriev

The European Union continues to follow closely the situation of Yuri Dmitriev, a respected historian known for his uncompromising investigation and documenting of mass graves of the victims of Soviet repression in 1937-38 and Chairman of the Karelia branch of Memorial Historical Society in the Russian Federation. On 23 March 2020, the Supreme Court of Karelia prolonged his pre-trial detention until 25 June 2020. On 7 May 2020, a request to have Dmitriev freed from custody because of a coronavirus outbreak in his detention facility was rejected by the Court.

We have expressed our concerns several times at the Permanent Council and at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting about his prolonged pre-trial detention of almost two years, pending secret retrial, under charges which we see as spurious and connected to his work as historian and human rights defender. We have repeatedly called for his release and we do so today with more urgency since his deteriorating state of health and age put him at additional risk in the current COVID-19 pandemic.

OSCE participating States have the responsibility to protect human rights defenders and to ensure that their citizens are able to know and act upon their rights. In Helsinki in 1975 and later in Copenhagen in 1990, participating States committed to ensure “the right of the individual to know and act upon his rights and duties in this field” and “the right of everyone, individually or in association with others, to seek, receive and impart freely views and information on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the

rights to disseminate and publish such views and information”. Participating States also agreed in Vienna in 1989 and in Copenhagen in 1990 to ensure every person’s right to a fair trial and right not to be subject to arbitrary arrest or detention, as well as to uphold the presumption of innocence. We call on the Russian Federation to uphold its OSCE commitments.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA and CANADA align themselves with this statement.

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