



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1323 Vienna, 8 July 2021**

#### **EU Statement on the continued crackdown on civil society in Russia**

The European Union rejects the decisions taken by the Russian Prosecutor General on 29 and 30 June to list several non-governmental organizations, including the Czech NGO “Freedom of Information Society”, the UK-registered “Khodorkovsky Foundation”, “Oxford Russia Fund”, “Future of Russia Trust”, as well as the “European Choice” group as “undesirable organisations”. It contravenes our OSCE’s 1990 Copenhagen commitment to ensure that individuals are permitted to exercise their rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of association, including the right to form, join and participate effectively in non-governmental organizations, which seek the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

None of the activities of these NGOs justify such measures. The EU has repeatedly condemned the Russian legislation on “undesirable organisations” and “foreign agents”. Both laws go against Russia's international obligations and human rights commitments and have a negative impact on the work of civil society, human rights defenders, journalists and other media actors in Russia.

The EU fully supports the key role played by independent NGOs in developing mutual understanding across borders and improving relations between countries. We call on the Russian authorities to reverse this decision and to contribute to the promotion of people-to-people contacts to the benefit of both Russia and the EU.

The EU also expresses its concern about the recent intimidation of journalists, media actors, and media outlets. On 29 June, Moscow police raided the apartments of staff of the independent media outlet, Proekt. The editor-in-chief, Roman Badanin, the deputy editor-in-chief, Mikhail Rubin and a correspondent, Mariya Zholobova, had their apartments searched and were subsequently interrogated.

Enabling a free exchange of ideas is crucial, particularly in the context of the run-up to the State Duma elections in September. The EU urges Russia to bring its legislation in line with international human rights obligations and OSCE commitments.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, and 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.