



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1334 Vienna, 2 September 2021

EU Statement on the CI to be raised by the US On concerns over intensifying repression in Russia ahead of the September Duma Elections

FINAL (342 words)

1. The EU shares the concerns brought forward by the United States on the situation in the Russian Federation ahead of the State Duma elections scheduled for 17-19 September 2021, including the reports about growing pressure on opposition figures and dissenting voices, as well as the recent labelling of the independent vote monitor “Golos” a “foreign agent”. The EU has repeatedly voiced its concerns related to the Russian legislation on “foreign agents” law and other laws that run counter to Russia’s OSCE and international human rights commitments, including with regard to freedom of expression and association.
2. The EU regrets that the restrictions imposed on the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission (EOM) made a credible independent observation impossible, preventing the OSCE from fulfilling its long-standing mission. Democratic elections are the fundament for all OSCE participating States: a large array of candidates from a range of political parties and movements, as well as election observation, contribute to their credibility.
3. One year on from Alexey Navalny’s poisoning on 20 August 2020, the EU continues to urge the Russian Federation to investigate this assassination attempt in full transparency and without further delay, and to fully cooperate with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to ensure an impartial international investigation. The European Union has condemned the attempt to assassinate Mr Navalny, and responded by imposing restrictive measures. We are concerned about Mr Navalny’s politically motivated arrest, the new criminal charges brought against him and members of his team, as well as the outlawing of Mr Navalny’s organisation and his regional offices ahead of the State Duma elections.

4. The cumulative impact of these developments, in conjunction with a raft of measures constraining the work of NGOs and individuals in Russia, results in the further infringement of fundamental freedoms.
5. The EU urges the Russian authorities to stop its campaign on dissenting voices, opposition figures, civil society and independent media. We expect Russia to respect and ensure human rights and to uphold their national and international obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member 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.