



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1346 Vienna, 25 November 2021

EU statement on the Current Issue to be raised by US on the human rights situation in Russia

1. The EU remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation in the Russian Federation, which confirms a continued negative pattern of shrinking space for independent civil society, human rights defenders, journalists and other media actors and independent political voices, as well as the restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms.
2. We are deeply concerned about the Russian General Prosecutor's decision to demand the liquidation of the International Historical Educational Charitable and Human Rights Society Memorial and the Moscow Prosecutor Office's demand to liquidate the Memorial Human Rights Centre. Memorial is a nationally and internationally respected NGO, one of the oldest in Russia. Its activities remain central to the defense of human rights and it has provided significant insight into the history of political repression, thus contributing also to preserving the memory of individual victims.
3. While we have committed to the freedom of association in the OSCE, the move to initiate the liquidation of Memorial is yet another case of the use by Russia of the so-called "foreign agents" law to limit the space for independent thought and to curtail historical scholarship and critical debates, including journalists and other media actors. The eventual dismantling of Memorial would be an irreplaceable loss for the Russian people and the rest of Europe.
4. The EU has repeatedly condemned the Russian legislation on "foreign agents" that runs counter to Russia's international human rights law obligations, including with regard to freedom of expression and association. The EU urges the Russian

authorities to review current legislation in order to bring it in line with its obligations under international law, including the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as its OSCE commitments.

5. The EU welcomes the Andrei Sakharov Freedom Award bestowed by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee on Yury Dmitriev, a close Memorial collaborator. We reiterate our concerns about Mr. Dmitriev's continuing imprisonment based on spurious charges, which we see connected to his work as historian and human rights defender. We also welcome that the European Parliament awarded this year's Sakharov's Prize for Freedom of Thought to opposition politician Alexei Navalny. We underline the importance of judiciary independence and call for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Dmitriev, Mr. Navalny and others who have been arbitrarily arrested or convicted by politically motivated court decisions.
6. We also urge the Russian Federation to implement the recommendations of the Moscow Mechanism rapporteur regarding the allegations of serious human rights violations and abuses in the Russian Federation's Republic of Chechnya committed during January 2017 to November 2018 against LGBTI persons, human rights defenders, members of the independent media, lawyers and others.

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