



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1431 Vienna, 6 July 2023

#### **EU Statement on serious human rights violations in Russia**

1. Russian authorities continue their systematic oppression and disregard for the human rights of their own citizens. Repressive legislation and politically motivated trials are used to crack down on those who speak out against Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, and advocate for democracy and human rights in Russia. Oleg Orlov, a prominent human rights defender, co-chair of the renowned Memorial organisation, and a frequent participant in OSCE events, is currently facing charges of "discrediting the Russian Armed Forces" due to his criticism of the war in Ukraine. We urge Russia to abide by the Russian Constitution and drop criminal charges against him.
2. The opposition politician and anti-corruption activist, Alexei Navalny, is being tried on new trumped-up charges of "extremism" and faces an additional decades-long prison sentence. The court hearings are taking place in closed doors, in violation of Mr. Navalny's right to a fair trial. We reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of Alexei Navalny. The Russian authorities are responsible for his safety and health.
3. Others are exposed to intimidation and threats, as shown by the appalling attack that took place on 4 July against prominent Russian journalist of Novaya Gazeta, Yelena Milashina, and lawyer Alexander Nemov in Grozny, Chechnya. We echo the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media strong

condemnation of this brutal attack and her expectation that the Russian authorities will do everything in their power to bring those responsible to justice, in line with the calls made by several Russian officials for investigative and prosecutorial measures.

4. This is only the latest episode in a series of human rights violations and acts of intimidation against civil society across Russia. In the politically motivated trial against Zarema Musaeva that Mr. Nemov and Ms. Milashina were to attend, Ms. Musaeva received a sentence of 5.5 years in a penal colony. This clampdown started years before Russia's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine and has accelerated, with years of internal repression preceding external aggression, as last September's report under the Moscow Mechanism confirmed.
5. The European Union expects the Russian authorities to put an end to these attacks and ensure that journalists and human rights defenders are able to carry out their work in a safe environment without fear of reprisals.
6. We reiterate our call for Russia to immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate all those imprisoned for politically motivated charges. We also urge Russia to repeal its oppressive legislation, including laws censoring truthful information about Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and laws on so-called "foreign agents" and "undesirable organisations" that are only used to suppress civil society, media and independent voices. The EU will continue to support Russian independent media, civil society, and human rights defenders inside and outside Russia.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area.

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