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United States Mission to the OSCE

Concern About the Arrest of Kirill Serebrennikov of the Gogol Center

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry R. Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
August 31, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States remains concerned by ongoing efforts to silence independent voices in Russia, where the government fails to uphold the country's OSCE and other international commitments and obligations regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United States is closely monitoring the alleged fraud case and subsequent house arrest of Kirill Serebrennikov, the widely-respected Art Director of the Gogol Center in Moscow. Despite the Kremlin's comments to contrary, we remain concerned that Russian authorities made this move as a political message to the broader arts and culture community that independent views will not be tolerated. We urge Russian authorities to adhere to fair trial guarantees. The United States stresses the right of all to freedom of expression, including in the spheres of arts and culture.

The Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without retribution. The Russian government has taken on international obligations and OSCE commitments to protect and promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of everyone, regardless of political affiliation or personal views.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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