

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 892nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Vienna, 1 December 2011

Regarding questions of tolerance and non-discrimination in the Russian Federation

The European Union and its Member States note with concern that the St. Petersburg Parliament adopted on 16 November at the first reading a draft law to punish administratively and financially “any public action intended to promote male or female homosexuality, bisexuality, transgenderism and paedophilia among minors”. Similar laws have already been adopted by the regional parliaments in Ryazan and Arkhangelsk.

We believe that this draft law could constitute an infringement of human rights and discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals, in particular by limiting their freedom of expression and their freedom of association and assembly. We have questions as to whether this text is in conformity with Russian federal law and with the international commitments to which Russia has subscribed, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. We recall in particular that, in its ruling “Alexeyev versus Russia” of 21 October 2010, the European Court of Human Rights already condemned Russia for the repeated bans of the Gay Pride marches, which were opposed by the Moscow municipal authorities.

We are also concerned by the fact that this draft law aims to create an unacceptable link between homosexuality, which was decriminalized in Russia in 1993, and paedophilia.

These developments demonstrate the persistence of discrimination in the OSCE participating States. This situation underscores the need for the OSCE to combat all forms of discrimination, including those based on a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

We would be grateful if the delegation of the Russian Federation would bring this statement to the attention of the Parliament and Governor of St. Petersburg.

The candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro¹ and Iceland², the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and potential

1 Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area.

candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Norway align themselves with this statement.