



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No 1139 Vienna, 30 March 2017

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#### **EU Statement on “Restrictions on the Freedoms of Expression, Association, and Assembly in the Russian Federation”**

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The European Union expresses its deep concern at the large scale detention of peaceful protesters, including many young people as well as journalists covering the anti-corruption demonstrations in Russia last Sunday, and their subsequent sentencing. The response by the authorities to peaceful demonstrations was arbitrary and indiscriminate. Thousands of Russian citizens across the country, including founder of the Anti-Corruption Foundation and opposition leader Alexei Navalny, were prevented from exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. These rights are the foundations on which the OSCE's human dimension commitments are built and are at the core of our comprehensive concept of security. In Copenhagen in 1990 all participating States agreed that everyone will have the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration, and will have the right to freedom of expression and association. Any restrictions on these rights must be prescribed by laws, consistent with international standards and principles, including proportionality, and applied in line with Russia's human rights obligations.

We urge the authorities of the Russian Federation to release all those who have been detained for exercising these rights, and to fully abide by their OSCE and other international commitments, and to guarantee their citizens the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA and CANADA align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.