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**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 933  
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**EU statement on the Russian NGO law**

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The European Union would like to recall its statement at the 920<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council, on 12 July 2012, in which it expressed concern at the amendments introduced to the Russian NGO law compelling Russian NGOs engaged in vaguely defined political activities and receiving foreign funding to present themselves as “foreign agents”. On the occasion of the entry into force of this new law last week, we reiterate our concern about the effect that it will have on Russian civil society and its functioning.

By creating new registration requirements for NGOs and by labelling them as “foreign agents”, a term that could generate mistrust, the new law will have a negative impact on the free operation of civil society and on the exercise of the right to freedom of association. Moreover, we are concerned that the stated refusal of dozens of NGOs operating in the Russian Federation to comply with the new law could additionally restrict their activities in the future.

We have stressed repeatedly that a vibrant civil society is a fundamental pillar of democracy. We thus call on all participating States to implement relevant OSCE commitments, by enhancing the ability of NGOs to make their full contribution to the respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, rule of law and democracy, including free and fair elections.

The Acceding Country Croatia\*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland+ and Serbia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.