



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1106 Vienna, 23 June 2016

EU Statement on New Legislation restricting freedom of expression and access to information in Russia

On June 10, the Russian state Duma adopted in a third reading a number of legal amendments placing excessive responsibility on internet content aggregators and search engines for the reproduced content that they disseminate. The EU shares the concern of the Representative on Freedom of the Media Ms Dunja Mijatovic, expressed in her 13 June statement. The legislation risks seriously infringing on access to information, freedom of expression and the independence of media. This development also takes place against a backdrop of increasingly tight undue government control of the information space, online and offline, and continued attempts to silence critical voices.

In this context, the EU reiterates that we have all, as OSCE participating States, agreed to keep the Internet an open and public forum for freedom of opinion and expression. We urge the Russian Federation to reverse actions contrary to this commitment. We will continue to follow closely the developments concerning this legislation, and call on Russia to draw on the expertise and advice of the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

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 and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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