



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 921
Vienna, 19 July 2012**

EU statement on the amendments to the law ‘On the Protection of Children from Information Detrimental to their Health and Development’ in the Russian Federation

The European Union follows closely the recent developments in the Russian Federation with regard to amendments to the law "On the Protection of Children from Information Detrimental to their Health and Development", which passed in its third reading in the State Duma last week.

The EU shares the concerns expressed by the Representative on Freedom of the Media in her statement of 10 July 2012. We are concerned that attempts to ban, in a few cases without the need for a court order, vaguely defined Internet content in a non-transparent manner might lead to over-blocking and possibly censorship, thus hindering the free flow of information.

We note the statement of the representative of the Russian Federation at the last meeting of the Permanent Council. We understand that the draft before the State Duma has been amended in the course of subsequent readings. Therefore, we would be grateful if the delegation of the Russian Federation provided us with updated information on this law, including as to what would constitute harmful content.

The European Union is determined to take firm action to combat child pornography and protect children from all forms of violence, abuse,

neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation in accordance with all international obligations, including those enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, as well as the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage the Russian Federation to sign the latter.

The EU welcomes the engagement by the Representative on this issue and encourages the Russian Federation to co-operate with the Representative and to make use of the assistance and expertise offered by her Office.

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.