



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1191
Vienna, 5 July 2018**

**EU Statement on the Rule of Law and Human Rights
Defenders in the Russian Federation**

The EU is deeply concerned that on 26 June, a local Russian court confirmed the continued detention of Mr Oyub Titiev, Director of the regional Memorial Human Rights Centre in Grozny, Russian Federation. We note that Mr Titiev's trial began on 3 July. We have previously raised our concerns about Mr Titiev's detention in statements to the Permanent Council on 18 January, 1 February, 15 March and 12 April, and 14 June. Mr Titiev's detention follows a long line of arrests, attacks, intimidation and discrediting of independent journalists and human rights defenders working in Chechnya. We continue to call on the Russian Federation to release Mr Titiev, and give him the opportunity for a fair trial outside of Chechnya.

As we have explained previously to the Permanent Council, Mr Titiev's arrest appears to be directly connected to his human rights work for Memorial. The organisation has been targeted in recent months in the North Caucasus, including through arson attacks on its office in Ingushetia and on Mr Titiev's lawyer's car in Dagestan, as well as an attack against Mr Sirajutdin Datsiev, the Head of Memorial's office in Dagestan.

We repeat our concerns that the charges against Mr Titiev raise significant doubts and have strong echoes of other questionable convictions on drug-related offences of individuals working on human rights in Chechnya, such as Ruslan Kutaev in 2014 and Zhalaudi Geriev in 2016.

We again draw attention to the reports from Mr Titiev's lawyer alleging serious procedural anomalies in relation to the search of Mr Titiev's car and the detention of Mr Titiev, who was questioned for seven hours without legal representation before

being charged. We are therefore concerned that there is a serious risk that Mr Titiev will not receive a fair trial, in particular should it be held in Chechnya itself, and that the charges against him are motivated by his work to defend human rights there.

We also draw attention to the case of Mr Yuri Dmitriev, respected historian and representative of Memorial in Karelia, about whom we spoke on 12 April. On 14 June, Mr Dmitriev had his acquittal overturned by Karelia's High Court, and on 28 June the Petrozavodsk City Court ordered that Mr Dmitriev be remanded in custody. The dubious charges previously brought against him led to his detention for a period of 13 months. We are concerned that Mr Dmitriev's arrest is in response to his role as representing Memorial and his work as a historian, dedicating his life to investigating crimes committed during the Stalinist era.

We take this opportunity to again remind the Russian Federation of their commitments, freely entered into, in Helsinki in 1975 and later in Copenhagen in 1990, to ensure "the right of the individual to know and act upon his rights and duties in this field" and "the right of everyone, individually or in association with others, to seek, receive and impart freely views and information on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to disseminate and publish such views and information".

The Russian Federation has a responsibility to protect human rights defenders and to ensure that all individuals in the Russian Federation are able to know and act upon their rights.

Finally, we call on the Russian Federation to ensure full respect for Mr Titiev's and Mr Dmitriev's human rights, and to release them immediately. We reiterate the call made by the Director of ODIHR, Ingibjorg Gisladdottir, in her statement of 10 January following the arrest of Mr Titiev, to ensure full respect for the rights to a fair trial, to physical integrity and dignity, and to protection from judicial harassment, criminalisation and arbitrary arrest.

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.