



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 916
Vienna, 14 June 2012**

EU statement on right of assembly in Russia

The European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the Declaration by the spokesperson of High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on right of assembly in Russia, issued 12 June 2012 in Brussels:

"High Representative Catherine Ashton expresses concern about the steps taken recently in Russia to limit the scope for public rallies.

She calls on the Russian government to engage with European institutions to ensure that the new law on public rallies meets European standards, as is the expressed intention of President Putin. She recalls that legislation governing public rallies should first and foremost guarantee freedom of assembly.

In this context, she is particularly concerned about attempts to intimidate protest leaders and prevent them from participating in today's demonstration. Peaceful assembly is a fundamental right, and strong measures to curtail this right are likely to prove counterproductive.

The High Representative encourages the Russian government and civil society to engage in a constructive dialogue on promotion of democratic standards and future reforms."

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.