



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response on Freedom of Expression in Russia, as raised by the European Union

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 23, 2016

The United States would like to align itself with the statement made by the European Union, and we reiterate the importance of protecting freedom of expression online and off, consistent with our OSCE commitments.

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

1. 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 Mijatović, 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.

2. 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.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.