



PC.DEL/555/17
28 April 2017

ENGLISH only

EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1143
Vienna, 27 April 2017**

**EU statement on the continued reports of arrests and murders of
gay men by the Chechen Government**

The European Union remains deeply concerned about disturbing reports from the press and civil society and testimonies from victims of mass arrests of men in Chechnya on the basis of their actual or alleged sexual orientation, of a large number of cases of torture and several deaths. We called on the Russian Federation in our previous statement in the Permanent Council on 6 April 2017 to urgently conduct in-depth investigations of the alleged cases of arrest and killing, and to end any abuses against any of its citizens based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

We also join Director of ODIHR Michael Link's recent call to the Russian Federation authorities for prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators, protection of vulnerable persons, as well as for full rehabilitation of victims of torture.

We remind the Russian Federation of the international commitments on respect of fundamental freedoms and fight against discrimination, as provided for in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We call on the Russian Federation to abide by its OSCE commitments on combating all forms of discrimination made in Madrid in 2007 and on ensuring that no one will be subject to arbitrary arrest or detention as agreed in Vienna in 1989 and Moscow in 1991.

We call on the Russian Federation to share with OSCE participating States the result of the verifications of the allegations of arrests and killings, as indicated by the Press Secretary of the Russian President, Dmitry Peskov, and the Chairman of the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights, Mikhail Fedotov.

We express our concern that individuals reporting on human rights violations become targets themselves. In the Russian Federation, journalists have been victims of assassination

attempts. Journalist Yelena Milashina, who reported on the persecution of persons on the basis of their sexual orientation for the newspaper Novaya Gazeta, is currently hiding in an unknown location. We call on the Russian Federation to ensure the protection of journalists and other actors who report on the case.

We also reiterate our call to the Russian Federation to guarantee the safety of all its citizens without discrimination of any kind. The EU reaffirms its resolute commitment to combat all forms of discrimination all over the world, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

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 SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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