



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1180 Vienna, 22 March 2018

EU statement on the inclusion of two organisations in the list of so-called “undesirable organisations” in Russia

The European Union expresses its concern over the decision by the Russian authorities on 13 March to include two further organisations in the register of so-called “undesirable organisations”. These organisations are: the European Platform for Democratic Elections; and the International Election Study Centre.

Including these bodies as so-called "undesirable organisations" further reduces the space for civil society and restricts the exercise of fundamental freedoms in Russia. We also note that this step was taken just ahead of the presidential elections of 18 March.

These organisations support or conduct citizens' election observation in the Eastern Partnership countries, the Russian Federation and the European Union. Such independent observation is a necessary element for free, transparent and credible elections. Their listing means that all their activities and information material are from now on banned in Russia.

We have previously made clear our concern over this legislation and its negative implications for the protection of human rights, including freedom of association and freedom of expression.

In Copenhagen in 1990 we all committed to “ensure that individuals are permitted to exercise the right to association, including the right to form, join and participate effectively in non-governmental organizations which seek the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms”. We expect all States, including Russia, to abide by this commitment.

We underline that pluralism and a strong civil society are essential parts of a functioning democracy. This legislation, alongside the "foreign agents" law,

restrictions on foreign media ownership or the excessive use of anti-“extremism” regulations, are restricting the exercise of fundamental freedoms and severely limiting the space for civil society in Russia. We therefore urge Russia to remove these restrictions and ensure that civil society organisations are able to contribute fully to Russia’s development.

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 and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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