



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1112 Vienna, 8 September 2016

EU statement on the Inclusion of the Levada Centre in the "Foreign Agents Registry" of the Russian Federation

With the decision by the Russian Ministry of Justice on Monday to list the Levada Centre in the so called "Foreign Agents Registry", the restrictions on independent civil society in the Russian Federation became tighter.

The number of Russian NGOs labelled as "foreign agents" in the Russian Federation has increased to a total of 141 since the law entered into force in 2012.

Targeting the activities of the Levada Centre, Russia's leading non-governmental polling and sociological research organisation, is of particular concern ahead of the State Duma elections of 18 September.

We call once again on the Russian authorities to reconsider their decisions on branding Russian NGOs as "foreign agents", which is clearly aimed at restricting their independence and threatening their very existence.

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 country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 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.