



STATEMENT ON FOLLOWING UP THE VIENNA MECHANISM ON REPORTS OF ARBITRARY AND UNJUST DETENTIONS IN RUSSIA

As delivered by Ambassador Ellen Svendsen at the Permanent Council Vienna,
27 March 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following invoking states:
Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Portugal, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom and my own country Norway.

On March 22nd of last year, a coalition of forty-one participating States – exercised the Vienna Mechanism to address our deep concerns about political prisoners in the Russian Federation.

This was done to remind us of our international obligations and joint commitments which prescribe that, among other things, no person should be subjected to arbitrary detention, arrest or violence simply because they speak out. The Vienna Mechanism included specific questions, seeking clarity on the treatment of detainees, the issue of torture in prisons, and the steps being taken to protect civil and political rights, as well as to secure medical attention whenever necessary. Given the situation of Maria Ponomarenko among many others, these questions are all the more topical.

Regrettably, a full year later, the Russian Federation has still not responded. The silence runs counter to the commitments we all share within the OSCE. We will redouble our efforts and explore further avenues to get clarity on the treatment of political prisoners in the Russian Federation.

Because when the voices of the unjustly detained are silenced, we have to continue to remind Russia of its obligations and commitments. When one participating State fails to meet its commitments, the rest of us must stand up and reaffirm them. And when international commitments and obligations are violated, we must remain steadfast and united, fighting injustice wherever it may take root.

Thank you.