

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1007
Vienna, 10 July 2014**

EU Statement on the Violent Attack against the Human Rights Defender, Andrei Yurov, on 1 July 2014

The European Union condemns the violent attack against the human rights defender, Andrei Yurov, in Voronezh on 1 July. Mr Yurov was attacked by masked assailants who beat him and sprayed a liquid on his face, resulting in him sustaining first degree burns in one eye.

Mr Yurov is a member of the Council for Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights with the President of the Russian Federation and a regular active participant at OSCE events. As the Head of the Council's Committee for Human Rights Abroad he directly monitors human rights developments in Ukraine, including Crimea, where he has travelled extensively. On 8 May 2014 Mr. Yurov briefed OSCE delegations on the human rights situation in Crimea.

The European Union is deeply concerned that this attack may be linked to Mr Yurov's human rights work, particularly recent work in Ukraine. The emergence of banners in Voronezh labelling local human rights defenders as traitors and fifth columnists is extremely troubling. Linked to this, the European Union reiterates its concerns at legislation in the Russian Federation requiring non-governmental organisations receiving funding from abroad and engaged in supposedly "political activities" to register as "foreign agents". We are concerned about the use of the politically charged term "foreign agent" that encourages the stigmatisation of human rights defenders within Russian society, and prompt further abhorrent acts against them under a misguided notion of patriotism.

We welcome the launch of a criminal investigation by the local police into the incident. We call on the Russian authorities to take steps to ensure the protection of all human rights defenders in Russia in line with their OSCE commitments and encourage them to draw on the recently published OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Protecting Human Rights Defenders.

The Candidate Countries MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.