



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Bolotnaya Verdicts

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 27, 2014

The United States joins the European Union in expressing its deep disappointment at the sentences handed down by a Moscow court in the cases of eight individuals arrested after the Bolotnaya Square protests in Moscow in May 2012, when thousands of Russians exercised their rights to the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly by protesting peacefully and demanding fair elections and government accountability. This is another example of punishing Russians for exercising their internationally recognized freedoms of speech and assembly. We call upon the Russian government to demonstrate its commitment to the rule of law by correcting this injustice.

The United States is also disturbed by the large number of detentions made at peaceful demonstrations in support of these defendants on February 21 and February 24. In Moscow alone nearly 800 people were detained, and political figures such as Boris Nemtsov and Aleksey Navalny were arrested and will spend up to 10 days in jail. We call upon the Russian government to uphold its OSCE commitments and respect the rights of all citizens to exercise their fundamental freedoms and universal human rights.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.