

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/360/19
29 March 2019

ENGLISH only



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on new restrictions of freedom of the media in Russia

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1221st meeting of the Permanent Council,
28 March 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

The Ukrainian Delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, which we fully support. At the same time, we would like to present a few remarks in our national capacity.

Ukraine has repeatedly reiterated its concerns over the continued failure by the Russian authorities to observe its international commitments and obligations on the standards of respect for human rights and freedoms. The ease, with which the Russian authorities dismissed the views from the Russian society on the laws in question, testifies to the gulf between the political regime and minimum democratic standards that Russia has committed itself to observe.

We note that the independent human rights organizations and civil society activists assessed the enacted legislation as “an open declaration of imposition of direct censorship”. The relevant open address was circulated and signed by over a hundred of Russia’s writers, journalists and bloggers from the independent human rights NGOs, such as “Free Word Association”, “PEN-Moscow” and St. Petersburg PEN-club.

They well understand that “the new laws establish the right of public officials at their own discretion and without any investigation or judicial consideration to take a decision under the fabricated and arbitrary pretext on banning the dissemination of any information and block any media content on the Internet indefinitely”.

We also note that, the Russian Presidential Council for Development of Civil Society and Human Rights urged President Putin to refrain from signing the restrictive laws and send them for detailed revision and amendment in parliamentary procedures.

The experts are of the opinion that provisions of the law “do not pursue legitimate goals, are redundant and disproportionately limit the freedom of expression”.

The imposed restrictions are aimed at preventing expression of critical opinions and voices on the public authorities in Russia, which is in full contradiction with the democratic practices, envisaging “acceptability and desirability of sharp criticism of government officials and public persons”.

Mr. Chairperson,

The enactment of the new restrictive legislation is yet another step in codifying and justifying reprisals against the journalists and other independent voices in Russia, where the freedom of

expression and media is increasingly and persistently limited and restricted in contravention of its OSCE commitments.

In view of these worrying trends in the OSCE participating State, which pursues actively the aggression against neighboring states, in particular Ukraine, we emphasize the importance for the OSCE and its institutions to be actively seized of monitoring the developments in the Russian Federation and to redouble their efforts in assisting Russia in bringing its legislation and practices in compliance with the relevant OSCE commitments and international standards.

We call on Russia to fully cooperate with the OSCE Institutions, in particular with the RFoM, and to draw on the expertise and advice in implementation of undertaken OSCE commitments.

For now Russia poses a constantly increasing threat to peace and stability in Europe.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.