



EU-RUSSIA CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM **ГРАЖДАНСКИЙ ФОРУМ ЕС-РОССИЯ**

Free Roman Udot and Stop the Persecution of His Family Members and the GOLOS Movement Colleagues **Statement by the Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum**

The Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum is dismayed at the arrest of Roman Udot, a Board member of the GOLOS Movement, a Forum member organisation, and demands his immediate release.

Roman Udot was detained on 20 May 2019 in Moscow. A criminal case he is charged with is connected with an incident at the Sheremetievo Airport. In March 2018, he grabbed a smartphone from a journalist of the NTV Channel, who was filming him and asking him questions in a manner, which was inappropriate for a professional journalist. Roman called police officers, gave the smartphone to them and filed a complaint about the persecution and the violation of privacy. The reporter, in turn, filed a complaint about the theft of the device¹.

Based on a complaint by NTV reporters, the police opened a criminal case against Roman Udot, according to Article 119 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (threat of murder or infliction of grave injury to health). Roman disclaims his guilt.

It is worth mentioning that the standards of the European Court of Human Rights prescribe that the pre-trial detention is a measure of last resort. Besides, the highest possible sanction according to the Criminal Code article Mr Udot is charged with foresees up to two years of detention. The Criminal Code prescribes that the arrest is not applicable in this case, unless there is a substantial proof for that the suspected person does not come to the interrogation or hides from the legal inquiry. The information available shows exactly the opposite: Roman has been called for an unscheduled interrogation and detained afterwards.

Throughout last years, Roman Udot and his relatives have been regularly persecuted and put under pressure. His parents got night calls with threats. People, who claimed to be journalists, ambushed and executed psychological pressure also on an underage child of Roman.

The Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum is convinced that a criminal case against Roman Udot and his detention are connected with a persecution for his professional activities, in particular with the monitoring of voting violations, and demands to immediately release him and stop the persecution of his family members and GOLOS colleagues.

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¹ See more information on the incident at www.golosinfo.org/ru/articles/142567 (in Russian)

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The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum was established in 2011 by non-governmental organisations as a permanent common platform. At the moment, 172 NGOs from Russia and the European Union are members or supporters of the Forum. It aims at development of cooperation of civil society organisations from Russia and EU and greater participation of NGOs in the EU-Russia dialogue. The Forum has been actively involved, inter alia, in the questions of facilitation of visa regime, development of civic participation, protection of the environment and human rights, dealing with history and civic education.

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