



End Liquidation Attempts against the All-Russia Movement “For Human Rights”

Statement by the Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum

The Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum is deeply disturbed by the escalation of the pressure on the All-Russia Movement “For Human Rights”, a Forum member organisation.

On 15 October 2019, the All-Russia Movement “For Human Rights” was notified that the Ministry of Justice had brought a lawsuit against the movement because of its alleged numerous violations of the law¹. Prior to initiation of the lawsuit, in the course of the past two months, the Head of the organisation, prominent human rights defender Lev Ponomarev, was fined three times for not complying with the so-called “foreign agents” law².

Founded back in 1997, the movement, to date, is one of the most influential and experienced human rights organisations, which unites multiple NGOs in the Russian regions. Bringing together hundreds of activists and supporters, the movement has been contributing to the protection of prisoners’ rights, to the advancement of such civil liberties as free and fair elections, to the resistance towards arbitrariness by the authorities and other crucial areas of the human rights work.

The Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum expresses its committed support to the All-Russia Movement “For Human Rights” and regards the attempt to liquidate it as a threat to human rights activities in the country. The Board urges the Russian authorities to immediately end the liquidation proceedings.

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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, 178 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.

¹ See www.zaprava.ru/ood-za-prava-cheloveka-likvidiruyut/?fbclid=IwAR0dw5QbRHxX79YzuLQy6XPN_vS-vvlbxbGWq3KIGC2PkiX2mPRsAs_3SGM (in Russian)

² See, e.g., www.kommersant.ru/doc/4110932 (In Russian). For a background information on the “foreign agents” law, look up, e.g., statements by the Steering Committee/ Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum dated [10 June 2014](#), [23 July 2014](#) and [20 January 2015](#)