



## **Stop the Attacks on the Rights of Transgender People in Russia, Hungary and Other Countries**

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

The Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum is deeply concerned about the recently proposed amendments to the Russian Family Code and Law No. 143-FZ "On Civil Status Acts"<sup>1</sup> that would result in a drastic worsening of transgender persons' life conditions and undue restriction of their rights.

The new bill would prevent persons who have changed their gender from amending the sex designation on their birth certificate and thus will have an enormously negative impact on the lives of thousands of people in Russia and will aggravate the discrimination already suffered by this vulnerable group. If adopted, this bill will effectively deny a large part of Russian citizens the right to marry and start a family. Moreover, the bill provides that new birth certificates already issued to transgender persons must be withdrawn and the old ones reissued, which would invalidate their existing marriages and destroy families, because the state does not recognise same-sex marriages. This totally unfounded legislative proposal targets the most vulnerable group of Russians, limiting their access to basic human rights.

Worth a separate mention is the fact that persons targeted by the bill would be banned from being legal guardians or adopting children even when they are blood relatives. In such cases, not only transgender persons but also children deprived of the right to family life will be victims of these cruel and unjustified provisions.

These legislative proposals, driven by homophobic and transphobic prejudice, limit access to equality and a decent life for a significant number of Russians.

It is a tragic fact that Russia is not the only country that discriminates against transgender people. In May 2020, Hungary banned people from legally changing their gender on identity documents, while the UK failed to adopt a law to protect transgender persons from discrimination<sup>2</sup>. We strongly condemn these discriminatory actions or inaction of the authorities in various countries and call on civil society to stand in solidarity with transgender people who once again are facing harsh pressure from their states.

17 July 2020

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.rferl.org/a/russian-duma-bill-prohibiting-transgender-marriage/30727833.html>

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g. [www.forbes.com/sites/jamiewareham/2020/05/25/trans-rights-in-global-recessionone-year-after-transgender-removed-from-who-list-of-diseases/#345b8f225d80](http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiewareham/2020/05/25/trans-rights-in-global-recessionone-year-after-transgender-removed-from-who-list-of-diseases/#345b8f225d80)

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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, 181 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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