



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

## **Stop the Unlawful Prosecution of Civic Activists in Russia**

### **Statement by the Working Group “Gender Equality” of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum**

We are deeply concerned and extremely alarmed at the arrest and charges against Daria Serenko – a poetess, feminist and civic activist, who was apprehended and detained in custody on 8 February 2022 in Moscow. Daria has posted recently that she spent the night in the police detention on the floor, while being ill and having otitis.

According to her lawyers, the charges against Daria are based on the Art. 20.3 of the Russian Administrative Offences Code – ‘The propaganda or public demonstration of the Nazi symbolic, extremist symbolic or attributes, or other symbolic or attributes prohibited by law’<sup>1</sup>.

According to the prosecution, Daria had committed the administrative offence by posting on her Instagram the Navalny's Smart voting symbol – the exclamation sign – in September 2021<sup>2</sup>.

The court has confirmed the charges at the hearing that took place on the 9 February 2022. Daria was found guilty of committing the administrative offence, and sentenced to 15 days of detention<sup>3</sup>.

This has happened despite of at least two decisions previously issued by the Russian federal courts stating that the Navalny's smart voting symbol is not extremist.

We believe that the position of authorities in Daria's case that the symbol is extremist merely because it is used by the political opposition is unlawful and constitutes a breach of democratic principles.

Daria has been long hunted by representatives of organisations and groups that demonstrated all the signs of extremism – nationalists, radical men organisations like the ‘Man's State’, and received threats, but Russian authorities did nothing to protect her. On the contrary, she is the one, who is being prosecuted by the authorities now for her active civic position.

---

<sup>1</sup> See <https://en.newizv.ru/news/society/11-02-2022/15-days-for-silent-protest-the-public-stood-up-for-activist-daria-serenko>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://generico.ru/2022/02/08/activist-daria-serenko-was-left-overnight-in-the-moscow-police-department-under-an-article-on-displaying-prohibited-symbols/>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2022/02/10/15-sutok-za> (in Russian)

The case of Daria is not the only one – there are several other activists and feminists – Maria Alyokhina<sup>4</sup>, Lucy Shtein<sup>5</sup>, and Rita Flores<sup>6</sup>, which received the same charges and sentences recently. It demonstrates that Daria's case is a part of systematic reprisals against civic activists and feminists, which represents violation of democratic principles and basic human rights and freedom, including gender equality.

We demand that the abovementioned and alike policies and practices exercised by the Russian authorities are stopped.

14 February 2022

**Contacts:**

**Elena Burmitskaya**, *Coordinator of the Gender Equality Working Group, EU-Russia Civil Society Network / Green Light for the Civil Initiatives' Foundation (GLCIF) (Bulgaria);*  
[burmitskaya@gmail.com](mailto:burmitskaya@gmail.com)

**Mikhail Tumasov**, *Coordinator of the Gender Equality Working Group, EU-Russia Civil Society Forum / Russian LGBT Network (St. Petersburg, Russia);* [thumassov@gmail.com](mailto:thumassov@gmail.com)

**The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum** was established in 2011 by non-governmental organisations as a permanent common platform. At the moment, 192 NGOs from Russia, the European Union and the United Kingdom 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.

---

<sup>4</sup> See <https://thetimeshub.in/maria-alyokhina-detained-in-moscow-on-charges-of-propaganda-of-nazism>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/08/25/pussy-riots-lucy-shtein-sentenced-for-navalny-protest-virus-violations-a74896>

<sup>6</sup> See <https://meduza.io/en/news/2021/07/22/pussy-riot-activist-rita-flores-jailed-for-15-days>