



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

## 'Je Suis Charlie' - Condemning Terrorist Attacks in France and Urging Against Rise of Anti-Islamic Ideas

### Statement of the Steering Committee of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum

The Steering Committee of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum expresses deepest condolences to the relatives and friends of victims of hideous hate crimes in France between 7 and 9 January 2015.

The journalists from the weekly satire paper "Charlie Hebdo" fell victim to fanatics, who called into question essential democratic freedoms – the freedom of expression and the freedom of media. In a series of terrorist attacks, 17 people were murdered, including kosher supermarket customers and police officers. These were misanthropic acts but also acts against rights and values adopted by the world community in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

The fact, that the terrorist attacks were executed by Islamic fundamentalists as a response to a series of cartoons published by "Charlie Hebdo" between 2006 and 2014 and depicting Prophet Muhammad, constitutes no justification for harassment of Muslims or limitation of immigration from the Islamic states. Unfortunately, after 7 January several mosques in France and other European countries were vandalised. It is a dangerous development playing into the hands of the attackers of "Charlie Hebdo".

A lot of Muslims spoke out strongly against the abuse of their religion by extremist groups. Along with millions of people worldwide on 7-11 January 2015, they joined the solidarity protests to declare: 'Je suis Charlie' (I am Charlie) or 'Not in My Name', - a powerful message that associating Islam with extremism has no ground.

The tragedy in France sends us a reminder about the urgent need for an intensified migration and integration policy in the EU as well as extension of civic education programmes across the world. Simultaneously, urgent steps should be taken by the EU to counter both terrorism and nationalism, as better investigation into terrorists' and nationalists' networks and ensuring responsibility of the perpetrators that endanger peace and the rule of law in Europe.

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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 140 NGOs from Russia and the European Union are member 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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