Call for an Independent Investigation into the Murder of

Boris Nemtsov

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

The Steering Committee of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum condemns in the strongest terms the murder of Boris Nemtsov, a prominent leader of the democratic movement in Russia. Nemtsov was shot on the night of 27 February 2015 in the heart of Moscow, at the bridge just meters from the Kremlin. We call on the Russian authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough, and independent investigation.

‘Boris Nemtsov is another name in the tragic list of those who lost lives in their struggle for fundamental rights and freedoms in Russia,’ says Katarzyna Batko-Tołuć, member of Forum’s Steering Committee. ‘There needs to be an efficient and impartial investigation into these killings. Every day of delay adds to the atmosphere of intimidation of independent critical voices and impunity for perpetrators of politically motivated crimes in Russia.’

Boris Nemtsov was an important ally and supporter of independent civil society in Russia. He was widely respected for his anti-corruption work and his consistent and clear position against the war in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, as he was critical of the war in Chechnya in the 1990s. It is particularly tragic and emblematic that Mr. Nemtsov was assassinated on the eve of a major anti-war protest demonstration in Moscow, which he was a principal organiser of.

The Steering Committee of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum expresses its deepest condolences to Mr. Nemtsov’s family and mourns the tragic loss of life of a politician who was one of the leaders of Russia’s democratisation efforts and an inspiration to many people.

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The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum was established in 2011 by non-governmental organisations as a permanent common platform of dialogue and cooperation. At the moment, 145 NGOs from Russia and the European Union are members 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, working with historical past, and civic education.