



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

### **Release Ukrainian Filmmaker Oleg Sentsov Statement by the Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum**

Oleg Sentsov, a Ukrainian filmmaker, was arrested by the Russian security services in May 2014 on terrorism charges after protesting the Russia's annexation of Crimea. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison in August 2015 after a trial marred with procedural violations<sup>1</sup>. Prominent Russian and international human rights organisations consider the charges and the verdict in the case Sentsov ungrounded and politically motivated.

Currently detained in the Labytnangy Correctional Colony in the Far North of the Russian Federation, Sentsov went on hunger strike on 14 May 2018 to raise awareness and ask for the release of dozens of Ukrainian detainees currently held by the Russian state<sup>2</sup>.

Russian authorities deny Ukrainian diplomats and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Verkhovna Rada access to Sentsov, as the former consider him a Russian citizen, like all other Crimean inhabitants, who did not personally refuse the Russian citizenship. Oleg Sentsov firmly insists on him being a citizen of Ukraine.

On 22 June, Sentsov's lawyer Dmitri Dinze visited him, describing his client as 'very weak, very pale.' He said Sentsov had lost approximately 20 kilos and faced problems with his heart and kidneys<sup>3</sup>.

Oleg Sentsov and his family are hoping that the FIFA World Cup will raise concern for his cause given it is the most widely followed sport event in the world.

A strong international mobilisation has been observed since Sentsov's imprisonment. A resolution was voted by the European Parliament on 16 June 2018 calling for the release of Sentsov as well as other 'illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and Russia-annexed Crimea immediately and unconditionally<sup>4</sup>.' On 28 June 2018, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted a resolution<sup>5</sup>, whereas it expressed its deepest concern about continued detention of over 70 Ukrainian citizens in Russia and Crimea, including Oleg Sentsov, 'on politically motivated or fabricated charges' and called upon their immediate release. These detainees' state of health and conditions of detention should be monitored by international observers, including

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<sup>1</sup> See more at [www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR4623252015ENGLISH.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR4623252015ENGLISH.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See more at [www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/24/russia-should-free-oleg-sentsov-fifa-world-cup](http://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/24/russia-should-free-oleg-sentsov-fifa-world-cup)

<sup>3</sup> See more at [www.rferl.org/a/hunger-striking-sentsov-s-health-deteriorating-lawyer-says/29313808.html](http://www.rferl.org/a/hunger-striking-sentsov-s-health-deteriorating-lawyer-says/29313808.html)

<sup>4</sup> See more at [www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+P8-RC-2018-0288+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+P8-RC-2018-0288+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en)

<sup>5</sup> See more at <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=7144&lang=2&cat=8>

