



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

### **Stop the Attacks on the Volgograd Human Rights Council Statement by the Solidarity Group of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum**

The Solidarity Group of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum expresses its deep concern over recent events around the Volgograd Human Rights Council.

The Volgograd Human Rights Council is an expert group of citizens and organisations that works in cooperation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, the Human Rights Commissioner of the Volgograd Region, and national, interregional, regional and local human rights NGOs.

On 29 September 2016, Igor Nagavkin, human rights activist and Head of the Regional Branch of the "For Human Rights" Movement, was detained and subsequently taken into custody by the Dzerzhinsky Court of Volgograd. He was charged with attempted theft. On 19 June 2017, the Cheremushki District Court extended his detention for a further 2-month period.

On 26 July 2017, Yuri Golder, a member of the Volgograd Human Rights Council and the Head of the Association for the Protection of Consumer Rights in Volgograd, was detained by officers from the Department for Combating Economic Crimes and the Investigative Committee. A criminal case was brought against him under Article 204 of the Criminal Code (Commercial Bribery), which entails the punishment of up to eight years of imprisonment.

On 28 July 2017, Nik Linkevich, a member of the Volgograd Human Rights Council, was severely beaten by two unknown persons in the entrance hall of his apartment building. The beatings resulted in a brain hemorrhage. The activist is currently in hospital, where doctors are fighting for his life. Nik Linkevich was beaten on the day that he – along with other activists - was going to hold a protest against the pressure on the Volgograd Human Rights Council.

The Solidarity Group of the EU-Russian Civil Society Forum does not rule out the potential that the recent events around the Volgograd Human Rights Council might be a manifestation of a general course to suppress human rights activity in Russia, as well as related NGOs.

We demand a transparent investigation of the criminal cases brought against Igor Nagavkin and Yuri Golder and a change in the use of detention as a preventive measure. We also demand a thorough investigation of the attack on Nik Linkevich.

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**Contact on behalf of the Solidarity Group of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum:**

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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, 156 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 the 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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