



EU-RUSSIA CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ГРАЖДАНСКИЙ ФОРУМ ЕС-РОССИЯ

After 70th Anniversary of Victory over Fascism: Let There Be No More War and Crimes against Humanity

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

The Steering Committee of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum urges the international community to stand by the system of international law and fundamental human rights established after the end of World War II.

Last week, the world celebrated the 70th anniversary of victory over fascism in Europe. 8/9 May 1945 is not only an important remembrance day in the world history but also a warning for descendants not to repeat fatal faults of the past and feel responsible for the past, the present, and the future.

As a result of reaction of the world to the horrors and crimes of World War II, a new system of international law was introduced, which has persisted – with slight changes – until now. One of the main institutional post-war achievements turned out to be the establishment of the United Nations Organisation – to become a pillar of peace, stability, and accountability of governments and regimes to international law and the humankind as a whole.

Adoption of fundamental documents of universal nature, aimed at protecting peace and human rights across the globe, followed the establishment of the UN, including the UN Charter (1945), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), four Geneva Conventions on International Humanitarian Law (1949), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), etc. Besides, regional organisations, targeted, inter alia, at prevention of recurrence of the tragedy of 1939-1945, were founded on the European continent – the Council of Europe (1949), the European Union (1958), and the Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1975/1995).

The Steering Committee of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum considers that joint work by all the states to implement the norms contained in the system of international law is an absolute precondition for a peaceful and prosperous future in Europe and beyond.

While the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum and its members have been holding on to the principles of international law, keeping governments accountable, and promoting fundamental values of peace and human rights in its work, we may not leave unnoticed serious recent threats to the post-war world order. The revival of nationalism, xenophobia, and acceptance of discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, colour of skin, or other grounds (eg, related to representatives of the LGBT

community and migrants), the crisis around Ukraine put in danger principles and norms the international community agreed upon after the end of World War II.

The Steering Committee of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum urges international organisations and institutions, national governments as well as individuals to stand by the system of international law and fundamental human rights. We also consider important to act with responsibility to the past, the present, and the future. One of the ways to do so is fostering the culture of remembrance and historical memory education – refraining from glorification of wars as a means of addressing differences between states and focusing on tremendous suffering and losses that wars, including World War II, have brought.

We say: ‘Never again!’ and ‘Let there be no more wars and crimes against humanity’.

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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 146 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, dealing with history, and civic education.

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

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