



EUROPEAN UNION

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The European Union – Russian Federation human rights consultations

On 7 December 2012, the European Union and the Russian Federation held their sixteenth round of human rights consultations in Brussels. The consultations were held in an open atmosphere, allowing the EU to raise its concerns on the developments affecting human rights in the Russian Federation. Both sides discussed at length developments in the rule of law (judiciary, law enforcement bodies, prisons), and civil society, including media freedom, the situation of NGOs in Russia and the set of worrisome new legislation shrinking civil society's space in the country. The rights of the child and issues of discrimination and racism were also addressed. As usual, the EU and Russia explored ways to improve their cooperation in international fora (UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council; OSCE and Council of Europe).

The EU raised a number of concerns related to specific human rights issues in the Russian Federation, in particular the deteriorating conditions in which non-governmental organisations operate in Russia further to the series of legislative changes (treason law, internet filtering, law on demonstrations, law on foreign funding for NGOs, libel law) which have been initiated since last June, the prospect of new laws affecting the LGBTi community and the harassment of human rights defenders and opposition leaders. The EU also deplored the lack of investigation into several criminal cases (Magnitsky, Estemirova, Politkovskaya). Russia shared its concerns on the rise of racism and xenophobia in the EU, pointed out at the lack of EU investigation into secret detention facilities and raised the issue of stateless non-citizens in a number of EU Member States. Both sides agreed to provide further clarification on individual cases of concern.

In line with established practice and so as to incorporate the views of civil society into the consultations, the EU met representatives of Russian NGOs in Moscow on 3 December and international NGOs in Brussels on 26 November.

P R E S S

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The next round of EU-Russia human rights consultations should take place in spring 2013. The EU has restated its wish to hold the next round in Moscow, where it would benefit from the participation of relevant line ministries and agencies, as these consultations have so far only been organised in the European Union.

Previous Human Rights Consultations:

20 July 2012

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/132000.pdf

29 November 2011

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126510.pdf

4 May 2011

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/121874.pdf
