



**COUNCIL OF
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Presidency press statement on EU/Russian Federation human rights consultations

On November 5, 2009, the European Union and the Russian Federation held the tenth round of human rights consultations in Stockholm. The human rights consultations between the EU and the Russian Federation took place for the first time in March 2005.

The consultations were held in an open and constructive atmosphere.

At the consultations the EU and Russia continued to address the human rights situation and developments in their respective countries, with a particular focus on cooperation in international human rights fora including the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, the functioning of civil society, rule of law and judiciary reform, protection of human rights in the fight against terrorism and the fight against racism and discrimination. The EU raised a number of concerns related to specific human rights issues in the Russian Federation, including in the Northern Caucasus. The EU also provided answers to Russia's concerns about certain human rights issues in the EU. Both sides will continue to provide clarifications on individual cases of concern in the respective countries. There was an exchange of ideas on how EU and Russia could increase their practical cooperation in the area of human rights.

P R E S S

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In keeping with the EU's practice of incorporating the voice of civil society into its meetings on human rights with third countries, the EU met representatives of Russian and international NGOs prior to the consultations. The representatives of the Russian NGOs also met experts and Parliamentarians in Stockholm on November 5 at a roundtable to discuss the human rights situation in Russia and the prospects of more practical cooperation between the EU and Russia in the field of human rights.

The next regular human rights consultations are planned to take place in the spring of 2010.
