

Case of Mr Yuri Dmitriev: UK statement

Mr Chair,

We previously raised our concerns about the case of Mr Yuri Dmitriev at the Permanent Council on 21 May and 16 July 2020.

On 29 September the Karelia Supreme Court increased Mr Dmitriev's sentence from 3.5 years to 13 years imprisonment in a high-security penal colony. The United Kingdom is deeply concerned by this sentencing. In addition, we have concerns that at his most recent hearing Mr Dmitriev was forced at a very late stage to accept a lawyer he did not choose and who was unfamiliar with the case.

Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom believes his case is a politically-motivated prosecution, triggered by Mr Dmitriev's work as a historian and representative of the human rights organisation Memorial.

We remind the Russian Federation of their OSCE commitments on Human Rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. In particular, we highlight the extensive OSCE commitments made in Copenhagen in 1990, including the right to a fair trial; the reaffirmation of those commitments in the 1991 Moscow Document; and the Ljubljana Decision of 2005 on Upholding Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Criminal Justice Systems.

Mr Chair,

We reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr Yuri Dmitriev, also noting that in light of Mr Dmitriev's age, health, and the Covid-19 pandemic, there is also a strong humanitarian case for his release.