

Continued crackdown on civil society in Russia: UK statement

Mr Chair,

We have previously expressed our deep concerns about Russia's legislation on so-called "undesirable organisations" and "foreign agents", which negatively impacts the work of civil society organisations in Russia. This legislation is being used to shrink the space for independent civil society in Russia.

The Russian authorities' recent designation of non-governmental organisations as "undesirable", including the designations on 30 June of the Future of Russia Foundation; the Khodorkovsky Foundation; the Oxford Russia Fund, and European Choice is unjustifiable and disregards the fundamental freedoms and human rights of Russian citizens.

They are actions which run counter to Russia's international human rights commitments, including under the OSCE's human dimension.

As OSCE participating States, we have collectively agreed on the important role played by civil society in helping us implement our OSCE agreements and commitments.

For example, in [Moscow in 1991](#) we recognised that the active involvement of such organisations helps to ensure continued progress against our human dimension commitments.

In [Istanbul in 1999](#), we confirmed our pledge to "enhance the ability of NGOs to make their full contribution to the further development of civil society and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms", and in [Maastricht in 2003](#) we pledged to support and help strengthen civil society organisations.

The current actions by Russian authorities are not in line with those agreements. They do not promote a safe and open environment for NGOs' activities and enable their continued growth.

We therefore urge, again, the Russian authorities to reverse these designations, to support the promotion of people-to-people contacts to the benefit of Russian citizens, and to take all measures necessary to fulfil their obligations under the OSCE's human dimension and other international human rights commitments.