



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on the trial against journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva in the Russian Federation

The European Union closely follows the case of Svetlana Prokopyeva, journalist with Radio Ekho Moskvyy in Pskov and contributor to various other media, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Russian Service. She has been accused of "justifying terrorism" after having stated in a radio programme that a terrorist attack at an FSB building was linked to the social and political situation in Russia, and that the incident was a result of the state's ongoing restrictions on political and civil liberties. The trial is ongoing, and a verdict is soon to be expected. Ms Prokopyeva has been under house arrest since July 2019 and she faces a possible seven-year prison sentence.

We echo the call of the Representative on Freedom of the Media that the charges of condoning terrorism should be dropped.

The EU remains concerned about the overall safety of journalists in the Russian Federation. We are also worried about the situation regarding freedom of the media and freedom of expression, both online and offline, in the Russian Federation. We use this opportunity to reiterate our concern regarding the legislative restrictions imposed such as the "foreign agents" and the "undesirable organisations" legislation, as well as the amendments to Russian law imposing five year imprisonment for spreading false information about the COVID-19 pandemic. Fear of prosecution under this restrictive legislation may cause media actors to self-censor. We urge the Russian Federation to fully implement all OSCE commitments and international obligations related to freedom of expression and media freedom, including on the safety of journalists.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.