



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1198
Vienna, 18 October 2018**

EU Statement on the abduction and assault of Mr. Oleg Kozlovsky in the Russian Federation

The European Union expresses deep concern over the reported abduction and assault of Mr Oleg Kozlovsky, a human rights defender and researcher for Amnesty International, in Ingushetia in the Russian Federation on 6 October.

Mr Oleg Kozlovsky has stated that he was abducted by men claiming to belong to the local “Centre for Combating Extremism”. After repeatedly assaulting Mr Kozlovsky they forced him to strip naked, threatened to kill him, and conducted two mock executions where Mr Kozlovsky was forced to lie face down with a gun to the back of his head. They also threatened members of Mr Kozlovsky’s family.

Mr Kozlovsky was released in the neighbouring republic of North Ossetia. Amnesty International has lodged a formal complaint with the Russian authorities.

We urge the authorities in the Russian Federation to investigate this horrific attack on Mr Kozlovsky, and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

We remind the delegation of the Russian Federation that participating States agreed in 1975 that everyone has the right to know and act upon their rights: this includes the right to seek and receive assistance from others in defending human rights. In Budapest in 1994 we also emphasized the need for the protection of human rights defenders.

States have a responsibility to protect human rights defenders from abuse, and to take proactive steps to promote the full realisation of the rights of human rights defenders, including their right to defend human rights.

We would welcome an update from the Russian Federation into their investigation of this attack.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and CANADA align themselves with this statement.

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