



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY ON THE JUDGEMENT AGAINST THE RUSSIAN NGO  
GOLOS**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile to the Permanent Council  
Vienna 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013

**Thank you, Mr Chairman,**

Support to civil society, at home as well as abroad, is a priority for Norwegian authorities. We regard this as an important contribution to safeguarding democracy and therefore also to the implementation of our joint OSCE commitments.

In his statement about the judgement against the Russian NGO Golos and its Executive Director, Lilia Shibanova, Norway's Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide said that the judgement gives cause for concern and that it could make it more difficult for such organisations to work in the country.

**Mr Chairman,**

Golos has been fined 300 000 roubles for failing to register as a "foreign agent". Mrs Shibanova was fined 100 000 roubles. The judgement also requires Golos to register as a "foreign agent".

Golos has played an important role in the development of civil society in Russia through its election monitoring activities. In recognition of this work, the organization was awarded the 2012 Andrei Sakharov Freedom Award by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee.

The judgement against Golos shows that there is every reason for concern regarding the application of Russia's NGO law and a number of other recent legislative amendments. Those laws and amendments are putting an

unacceptable pressure on NGOs engaged in activities that are completely legitimate in any democracy.

We understand that a strong element in the case against Golos has been the money which the organisation allegedly received with the Sakharov Award. The fact is, however, that, while accepting the Award, Golos actually refused to receive the money. This is in itself an illustration of the pressure under which Russian NGOs presently find themselves.

**Mr Chairman,**

The Norwegian authorities have expressed concern about the situation for NGOs in Russia on a number of occasions, most recently during Prime Minister Stoltenberg's meeting with Prime Minister Medvedev in St Petersburg on 5 April.

We will continue to do so.

**Thank you.**