



Asociace pro podporu demokracie a lidských práv
/ Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights

Prague, April 20, 2023

Ladies and gentlemen,

The DEMAS Association would like to express its gravest concern over the latest prosecution of the EU – Russia Civil Society Forum. The Forum, a platform of 190 civil society organisations from both the European Union and Russia was labelled “undesirable“ by the General Prosecutor’s Office of the Russian Federation on April 11, 2023.

The Forum was established in March 2011 in Prague as a bottom up citizens’ initiative supported by the European External Action Service (EEAS), Czech and German Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and major international donors. It is worth mentioning that also Russian officials¹ were present from the very beginning of the Forum.

The Forum’s aim has always been to foster cooperation among civil societies that has been successfully passing off till its present interruption by the Russian authorities. Authoritarian steps taken toward the Forum’s members, such as labelling them as “foreign agents”, criminalization of their work and subsequent ban on activities has no place in the rules-based international order and should be completely stopped as illegitimate. The current stance of Russian authorities on the EU-Russia CSF only corresponds to the wider context for which the strong and resilient Russian civil society and critical voices from inside of the society might stand out as a problem.

We, in Czech civil society, will thus continue supporting all Russian anti-war and pro-democracy voices in the society as well as independent press as we have been doing over the past more than decade. It is out of the belief that civil society should overcome any barriers and stand up against injustice, violations of democracy and human rights as well as international law that the totalitarian regime has been doing on a regular basis.


¹ Advisor to the President of Russia, Chairman of the Council at the Russian Federation President for Development of Civil Society and Human Rights (Mikhail Fedotov, 2010–2019).

Today, we stand in solidarity with the EU-Russia CSF and we are not giving up with the 190 members that the Forum brings together across the wider Eurasian continent. Only together will we prevail over brutality, injustice and repression exercised by the authoritarian Russian regime.

Sincerely,



Marek Svoboda
Chairman of the Board of Directors



Sabina Malcová
Executive Director

Undersigned organizations: DEMAS members and Gulag.cz Association

DEMAS is an association of 14 Czech non-governmental organizations working to foster democracy and to support civil society, fundamental human rights, good governance and rule of law in the third countries. Since its establishment in 2008, DEMAS together with its member organizations has implemented a wide range of projects focused on sharing the Czech transitional experience. www.demas.cz

Contact Person: Sabina Malcová, DEMAS Executive Director, Phone: +420 774490824
Pavel Havlíček, AMO Research Fellow, Phone: +420 720123107
