



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE**

**Joint Nordic statement on  
the Moscow Mechanism report on Russia's legal and administrative practice in  
light of its OSCE Human Dimension commitments**

Delivered by Ambassador Anne- Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 22 September 2022

Mr Chair,

I deliver this statement on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden as well as my own country Norway. In addition to the joint statements already delivered on our behalf, we would like to add the following remarks in our national capacities.

We welcome Professor Nussberger to the Permanent Council and thank her for the thorough, detailed, and comprehensive analysis.

Mr. Chair,

Professor Nussberger's report is a meticulous account of how human rights and fundamental freedoms in Russia have been systematically curtailed over a period of many years. As a result of constant legislative reform, the report states that Russian legislation concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms is "clearly not in line with the Rule of Law".

The legislative amendments do not appear to serve any other purpose than to restrict the space for civil society, independent media and dissenting voices. The so-called "foreign agents" law and the "undesirable organisations" law are particularly chilling examples of this troubling development. The report notes that legislative reform is not constant but accelerates "as a direct response to social and political developments in the country". After every wave of demonstrations, such as in 2011/2012 following the Presidential elections, or 2021 in support of Aleksey Navalnyi, ever more restrictive legislation was introduced.

The Russian government has seen public dissent as particularly undesirable during its various military aggressions abroad. More severe restrictions to the fundamental freedoms and rights of the Russian population have been introduced, as Professor

Nussberger states, “in order not to be disturbed during the preparation for war or after it has started.” After the annexation of Crimea in 2014, new and more restrictive laws were implemented, and this development has intensified over time, with the peak of adopted, repressive laws, as well as other forms of pressure against civil society, being reached soon after Russia launched its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine.

Mr Chair,

The effects of these legislative changes and other forms of repression on society are severe. The report notes growing paranoia and mistrust, increasing brain drain as well as growing international isolation, which have a hampering effect on technological and scientific development. The Russian population is worse off for it. As Nordic countries, that have emphasized the importance of dialogue, internally and externally, we find this development particularly sad and regrettable.

The crackdown has also had a specific gendered aspect, as Professor Nussberger notes. Persons in vulnerable groups are particularly affected by public persecution. The report notes that the legislation on *prohibition to propagate non-traditional relationships* is “broadly applied as the Russian authorities consider nearly everything connected with gender and LGBTQI+ as propaganda.” This has effectively banned all available means of public expression of sexual minority rights, which contributes to prejudices, intolerance and discrimination. A draft law from July of this year will further tighten the screws on anything other than officially propagated family values.

The so-called foreign agent legislation has had a detrimental effect on the working space for civil society organisations dealing with gender equality and women’s empowerment. Women protesters also run the additional risk of being subjected to sexualized violence and humiliating, sexualized interrogation methods, of which the report mentions several cases. Finally, the report notes with concern that domestic violence is growing worse, as society is increasingly militarized.

Mr. Chair,

Russia’s internal human rights situation has been a cause of serious concern for a long time. While repressions against civil society have been implemented internally, their chilling effects are felt all too well externally – across Europe, globally, and most of all in Ukraine. Professor Nussberger’s report has only exacerbated the urgency of thoroughly addressing Russia’s compliance with its Human Dimension commitments.

In her report, she makes it clear that Russia’s external military aggression is directly linked to restrictive measures within its own borders. As Russia continues its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, it is important to shed light on all the factors that have made this aggression possible. We will not look away in silence.

As OSCE participating States, we confirmed a long time ago that protecting fundamental rights and freedoms is our first priority. These rights are of such importance that they can never be considered only an internal affair. As we stated in Moscow in 1991, and reconfirmed in Astana in 2010, “*Commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States*”.

It is our duty as OSCE participating States to react to Russia’s violations of its Human Dimension commitments. As Professor Nussberger’s report notes, the alarm bells have been ringing constantly with regard to the deteriorating human rights situation in Russia.

We urge Russia to engage with the findings of this report in good faith, and to take the appropriate steps to bring its legislation and practices in line with its Human Dimension commitments. The recommendations of Professor Nussberger’s detailed report are a good starting point.

Thank you