

Joint Declaration

Strasbourg, 24 November 2021

We note with the greatest concern the politically motivated action against Memorial International and the Memorial Human Rights Centre and protest resolutely against the threatened forced disbanding of the best-known and internationally renowned human rights organization in the Russian Federation.

For decades, Memorial has stood for a vibrant, humanistic culture of remembrance and an active, civic commitment to human rights. To this day, Memorial makes an invaluable contribution to historical reappraisal, rehabilitation of the politically persecuted and unjustly convicted, and respect for human rights. In the best sense of the word, Memorial is committed to social exchange and the realization of European values such as democracy, human rights and freedoms, which are also expressly mentioned by the Russian constitution, and thus to a united, peaceful Europe. Numerous representatives of our parliamentary groups in the European Parliament have maintained a close relationship with Memorial for decades and want to continue the important cooperation with Memorial and with all democratic representatives of Russian civil society, which contributes to international understanding.

In times of increasing tensions in Europe, cooperation between societies is an important guarantor of peace and understanding. We therefore note with concern that the legislation of the Russian Federation regarding the so-called “foreign agents” aims at stigmatizing and delegitimizing precisely this cross-border, societal cooperation. We support the demands of Memorial and wide sections of civil society that these laws be repealed.

The action against Memorial is contrary to the principles and values of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Paris. Disbanding Memorial International would be a direct attack on the legacy of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov. An independent, critical and professional reappraisal of history is essential for European-Russian relations.

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