



Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for **Europe**
Alliance des Démocrates et des Libéraux pour l'**Europe**



ALDE-PACE: statement on the situation in Russia between two elections

Strasbourg, 25 January 2012

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe unanimously condemns the latest developments in Russia which severely compromise the possibility for free and fair presidential elections on 4 March 2012. The Group is disappointed by the non-registration of the Yabloko presidential candidate Grigory Yavlinsky, yet another sign of the limitation of political competition and expression in the country. The ALDE hopes that the reported Supreme Court's decision to reverse the closure of the opposition leader Vladimir Ryzhkov's Republican Party will give the much-needed impetus to the liberalisation of registration procedures for all democratic political parties in Russia.

The ALDE is concerned at news that one of the country's independent election observation organisations, Golos, is facing imminent eviction from its offices, the latest development in a campaign of intimidation and harassment against civil society.

The ALDE therefore **calls on the relevant Russian authorities** to:

- guarantee the freedom to peaceful assembly and strive to work with the demands of the organisers of the rally on 4 February 2012. The ALDE also calls upon the authorities and demonstrators to act responsibly on the day of the protest;
- take immediate steps to bring the Russian legislation on party registration in conformity with European standards on freedom of association;
- undertake concrete measures to cease the intimidation and harassment of civil society and political opponents;
- fully examine the irregularities of the December 2011 parliamentary elections and bring to justice those responsible for electoral fraud.

Considering the absence of a PACE report on the honouring of obligations and commitments by the Russian Federation for the last seven years, the ALDE eagerly **urges the co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee** of the Assembly to produce the report without further delay.

The ALDE will continue to express its principled position on the situation in Russia. If no substantial improvements are made, the Group is ready to take further action based on the findings of the PACE observer mission to the presidential elections and those of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe following his upcoming visit to the country.

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