

ALDA President Mr. Oriano Otočan Statement

ALDA IS DEEPLY CONCERNED BY THE BILL THAT WILL UNDERMINE THE WORK OF NGOS IN RUSSIA

ALDA shares the concern of the international civil society community with the Russian Duma's decision on July 13 to adopt amendments to the law on Non Commercial Organisations (including NGOs).

The new law requires among a number of negative developments that organisations, which receive international funding to label themselves as "foreign agents" and to register with a specially authorized governmental body prior to receiving funding from any foreign sources if they intend to conduct political activities.

We consider that Russia has a legitimate right to introduce legislation to regulate foreign funding to organisations in Russia, but the current law as adopted is clearly not about legitimate concerns, but rather an attempt to undermine the work of NGOs in Russia and their possibility to operate freely.

ALDA regrets that Russia is taking this step against freedom and independence of civil society, which would prevent possibilities of future cooperation with Russian partners.

ALDA hopes that Russian authorities will change their approach and reconsider its thoughts about the valuable role NGOs play for international cooperation, also in the field of social and economic development. This step raises also some concerns about the possibility of a spill over these principles in other countries of Eastern Europe where ALDA is actively involved with the LDAs and programmes.

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