

Caen, 17th May 2019

ALDA's statement supporting civil society and civic activism at the local level in Russia

General Assembly of ALDA, Caen, 17th May 2019

ALDA expresses concern on the criminal charge against Anastasia Shevchenko, a pediatric surgeon from Krasnodar, Yana Antonova, and a young journalist from Yekaterinburg, Maxim Vernikov because of their civic activism in Russia. These three activists belong to an ALDA member organization, Open Saint Petersburg, and they face up to 6 years in prison for civic activism in support of local democracy. The three activists are accused of cooperation with "undesirable organization" because of their affiliation in Open Russia movement.

Open Saint Petersburg joined ALDA in 2018 as a first Russian organization involved in mobilization of citizens at the local by creating competences and awareness among local authorities and municipality councilors as well as civil society. They share the mission of ALDA which promotes democracy through concrete actions at the local level.

ALDA also regrets the recent brutal dispersal of a peaceful demonstration on May 1 in St. Petersburg and a series of criminal prosecution cases against peaceful activists might be considered as violation of human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights.

ALDA is the European organization for Local Democracy and supports civic local activism in Europe and its Neighborhood. We are convinced of the importance of dialogue between local authorities and civil society to secure successful, inclusive and sustainable communities. ALDA is a membership-based organization founded in 1999 with the support of the Council of Europe, which includes today around 350 members building a broad pan European alliance for local democracy working in the framework of the European values of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

ALDA hopes that Russian authorities will revise their decision and stop criminal prosecution of Anastasia Shevchenko, Yana Antonova and Maxim Vernikov as they performed for freedom and for the sake of the society and never acted against the Russian state.

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