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Reza Eslami Somea
Iran

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Roel von Meijenfeldt
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STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE NONGOVERNMENTAL INTERNATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES (ISC/CD) ON THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE OSCE PA COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS 9 DECEMBER 2011

We the members of the nongovernmental International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies (ISC/CD), concerned over the Human Rights issues posed by the arrests made in Russia following the recent parliamentary elections, strongly endorse and associate ourselves with the statement of the Chairman of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions issued in Vilnius on December 7, 2011. We join in the call to the Russian authorities to release the detainees, respect freedom of assembly and freedom of expression and refrain from unnecessary violence.

Statement of the Chairman of the OSCE PA Human Rights Committee on Freedom of Assembly in Russia

VILNIUS, 7 December 2011 – Matteo Mecacci (Italy), Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions today released the following statement regarding arrests made in Russia in the wake of parliamentary elections held Sunday:

“The Russian Federation, like all OSCE participating States, has committed to uphold freedom of assembly and expression. The recent news from Moscow and elsewhere concerning the detentions and arrests of hundreds of citizens peacefully expressing their dissatisfaction with the conduct of Sunday's elections is a cause for concern for the international community.

All countries have the duty to respect the dissenting opinion of its own citizens. Restricting these basic civil and political rights is not the way for any democracy to function and is a dangerous path for the authorities to follow.

For these reasons, I call on the Russian authorities to release those who have been detained during these demonstrations, to allow the exercise of freedom of assembly, according to international standards, and to refrain from the unnecessary use of force.

I also remain concerned that the web site of Golos, Russia's leading independent election observation organization, has been down since election day. I deeply regret the prosecution of Golos and am disheartened to see this organization fined for simply providing independent, impartial information reported by thousands of citizens throughout the Russian Federation. This trial and verdict sends a negative signal to civil society in Russia.”

*The ISC/CD is a global network of civil society organizations committed to democracy
and human rights, related to the Community of Democracies.*