

Vladimir Putin
The President of the Russian Federation
23 Ilyinka Street Moscow 103132
Russia

Brussels, 24 February 2014

Re: Concerns regarding threats against lawyer Dmitry Egoshin

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it also has observer representatives from a further twelve European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concern over threats received by Mr Dmitry Egoshin in his role as defence lawyer to Mr Vladimir Ott, who claims to have been physically assaulted by police and private security guards.

Mr Egoshin is a prominent lawyer working for the Mari-El regional branch of the Committee Against Torture (CAT), a human rights organisation engaged in fighting against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment that also provides free legal assistance and representation to victims.

According to the information that we received, on 6 February 2014, a police lineup was arranged by the Inquiry Unit of Police Department No. 3 under the Directorate of the Interior for the city of Yoshkar-Ola aimed at identifying those responsible for assaulting Vladimir Ott. During this activity, Mr Egoshin received direct threats from the suspects and their superiors, including Mr Sergey Rybakov, the Head of Okhrana, a security company. The CCBE was informed that a request has been filed with the competent authorities for Dmitry Egoshin and Vladimir Ott to be enrolled in the state witness protection programme and that this incident has been reported to the Ministry of the Interior. However, the CCBE is alarmed by these facts that show a threatening environment for lawyers engaged in the defence of human rights in the Russian Federation.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Furthermore, Article 17 states that:

Conseil des barreaux européens – Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe

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Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to take effective steps to ensure that the threats received by Mr Egoshin are promptly and impartially investigated. The CCBE also urges you to take all necessary measures to guarantee that Mr Egoshin's physical and psychological integrity are preserved and that lawyers in Russia are able to perform their professional duties in all circumstances, without fear of hindrance, intimidation and harassment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aldo Bulgarelli', with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end of the signature.

Aldo BULGARELLI
CCBE President