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Mr Peter van Dalen MEP
Ms Jude Kirton-Darling MEP
Mr Brando Benifei MEP
Mr Romeo-Franz MEP
European Parliament
Brussels

Dear colleagues,

I would like to thank you for your letter in which you express your concern about the conviction of Dennis Christensen and the situation for Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia. I have taken good note of your concerns and would like to assure you that the EU is following closely the cases of Jehovah's Witnesses who have been detained.

We have previously issued numerous statements about the persecution against Jehovah's Witnesses in the Russian Federation. In response to the latest wave of raids, detentions, reports of torture and the sentencing of Dennis Christensen, my Spokesperson issued a statement on 6 February on Dennis Christensen, referring also to other Jehovah's Witnesses held in detention. The statement underlines our expectation that Mr Christensen be released immediately and unconditionally.

As all other religious groups, Jehovah's Witnesses must be able peacefully to enjoy freedom of assembly without interference, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, as well as by Russia's international commitments and international human rights standards.

The EU Delegation in Moscow together with EU Member State diplomats attended the trial of Dennis Christensen to contribute to scrutiny and visibility by the international community, and report to us on developments. In addition, the EU also issued a local statement in Vienna in the context of the OSCE.

We will continue to follow closely and raise the case of Mr Christensen as well as other pending criminal cases against Jehovah's Witnesses. We believe that sustained diplomatic efforts can have an effect and can bring about some positive results. Our commitment to support human rights in Russia and throughout the world is as strong as ever.

Yours sincerely,



Federica Mogherini