

# EPDE protests against classification as “undesirable organization” in Russia

On 13 March 2018, the European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE), a civil society network of independent election observation organizations, and its Lithuanian member International Elections Study Center (IESC) were classified as “undesirable organizations” by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation.

Stefanie Schiffer, EPDE board member, commented: “We protest against the listing as “undesirable organization” and against the wholesale criminalization and discrediting of our network. We demand the immediate withdrawal of this measure by the Russian Ministry of Justice.

With the law on “undesirable organizations” introduced in 2015, the Russian government attempts to criminalize the international cooperation of democratic movements. Employees of listed international organizations and their partners in the Russian Federation may face up to six years imprisonment, a ban on entering Russia and numerous other sanctions for continuing their cooperation.

The German government criticized the law in 2015 as a “measure to isolate and discredit the critical civil society in Russia and to prevent cross-border cooperation,” which even increases the “sense of insecurity and fear that already exists in the Russian civil society”.

EPDE is an alliance of electoral observation organizations founded in 2012 with the aim of supporting citizens’ election observation in the countries of the Eastern Partnership, in

the Russian Federation and throughout Europe, and to contribute to democratic electoral processes.

Source: [www.epde.org](http://www.epde.org)