Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev case

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made today the following statement:

"I am deeply disappointed by the decision of the Moscow City Court to uphold the verdict in the Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev case, notwithstanding the slight reduction of the sentence from an additional six to five years in prison. I remain troubled by allegations of numerous violations in due process which reflect systemic problems within the Russian judiciary.

The Khodorkovsky and Lebedev case has become emblematic for the lack of confidence in how the law is applied in Russia today. President Medvedev’s decision to examine this case in the Presidential Human Rights Council is welcome. However, the EU calls on Russia to demonstrate its determination to establish a society based on respect for the rule of law. For genuine political, economic, and societal modernisation to take place, reforms should be undertaken in Russia toward establishing a transparent, independent and reliable judicial system, which inspires confidence and is free from political interference."

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