Statement by the spokesperson of the High Representative Catherine Ashton on the administrative fines against “GOLOS”

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

“The High Representative is very concerned by the recent judgments imposing fines on the civil society organization “GOLOS” and its director Ms Lilia Shibanova, as well as the obligation on GOLOS to register as a “Foreign Agent”. The work of GOLOS for free and fair elections contributes to the implementation of international commitments which Russia has agreed to, notably within the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

The ruling confirms widespread worries both inside and outside Russia regarding the implementation of the “Foreign Agent” law.

The EU has repeatedly expressed its concerns about growing pressure on civil society, the recent wave of restrictive legislation on NGOs and the widespread checks on their activities. The EU will continue to monitor developments closely.”