



International Federation of Liberal Youth Statement

IFLRY supports the newly established Russian liberal movement 'Solidarity'

At their inaugural congress just outside of Moscow on Saturday the 13th of December, liberals and democrats from all over Russia convened to set the course for Solidarity, a newly established organization that brings together representatives from various parties and NGOs. Its aim is to unite the country's liberal forces in a political environment that has been monopolized by Russia's executive under the leadership of Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. IFLRY Secretary General Bart Woord attended the congress on invitation of IFLRY observer member Yabloko Youth and the Russian youth opposition movement Oborona.

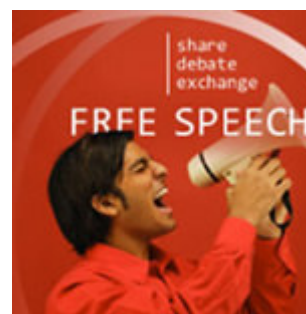
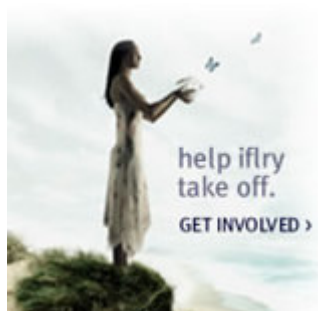
Bart Woord commented: "This deep cooperation between Russia's liberal forces is possibly the best news that has come out of Russia in years. Russia's long-term stability can only be secured in an open political system in which people agree to disagree and where sound market-oriented economic policies bring sustained prosperity throughout the country. It is up to today's liberals to convince the Russian population that the current government's autocratic direction is a dead-end road and liberal democracy is the only alternative."

Ilya Yashin, co-chairman of the youth of the Yabloko party and one of the initiators of Solidarity, stated: "The congress of Solidarity democratic movement became an important landmark in Russia's political life. For the first time in many years Russian democrats have managed to unite. All currently existing democratic organizations of Russia are represented in Solidarity, among them - the disbanded Union of Right Forces (SPS), Yabloko, United Civil Front and the People's Democratic Union. This is especially crucial today in the environment of the economic crisis. The knee-jerk reaction of the Russian authoritarian regime to the event only speaks for the strength of Solidarity."

Oleg Khozlovsky, coordinator of Oborona and also heavily involved in the creation of Solidarity, declared: "Solidarity's goal is more than just to win votes or implement a certain reform. This movement aims to change the whole political landscape in the country, stop its sliding deeper into authoritarianism, and reanimate liberal ideals among Russian people. Such an ambitious task is to be achieved by use of methods of non-violent resistance and it needs the highest degree of motivation, self-discipline, and honesty."

IFLRY once again confirms its commitment to supporting young liberals in Russia and wants to extend the same support to Solidarity.

For more information or questions, please contact IFLRY Secretary General Bart Woord (bart@iflry.org - 0031615624560). A special report on Solidarity for members and partners is available upon request.



IFLRY, the International Federation of Liberal Youth, is an international political umbrella organisation promoting cooperation among youth and student organisations to spread liberal values.

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