



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1198  
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**EU statement in reply to the AOB issue raised by Malta**

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As we mark the first anniversary of the horrific assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia, our thoughts go out to her family and friends. The EU has strongly condemned this heinous crime. Three persons have been arrested and charged with its execution, and we are confident that the Maltese authorities will continue their efforts in order to ensure that justice is fully served.

In this respect, we recall the EU position on media freedom and safety of journalists expressed many times at the OSCE and which remains unchanged. The European Union stands firm on the protection of free speech and the media. Democracy cannot survive if journalists are no longer able to report freely. Democracy relies and depends upon their work to criticise and hold the powerful accountable.

All those responsible for violent acts and crimes against journalists must be brought to justice. Accountability and strong judicial processes are key. The EU attaches the highest importance to creating and maintaining a safe and enabling environment so that journalists may perform the work independently, without undue interference, harassment, intimidation or fear of repression. In this context, we too applaud the Chair's intent to seek a decision on the safety of journalists at the Milan Ministerial Council.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ARMENIA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.