



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 903 Vienna, 01 March 2012

EU statement on Media Freedom in Kyrgyzstan

The European Union wishes to express its concern about a recent case concerning restriction of media freedom in Kyrgyzstan. The extra-judicial blockage of the internet platform for the independent news site “Fergana.ru” in the realm of the national Kyrgyz internet constitutes a backwards step in Kyrgyzstan’s efforts to further enhance media freedom.

We fully support the analysis of the issue set out by the Representative on Freedom of the Media in her press statement of 27 February. We agree that legislators should not adopt resolutions that aim at restricting freedom of the media, including online, but rather ensure that the Internet remains a free forum to exchange information and ideas.

We are aware of the resolution of the Kyrgyz Parliament adopted on 9 June 2011, asking for measures to restrict the respective internet platform. However, we would like to point out that this measure has been effectively introduced without being tested on its compliance with the Constitution through an appropriate court procedure and decision, and without due consideration of Kyrgyzstan’s own legislation and international commitments in regard to the freedom of the media. We call on the legislative, judicial and executive authorities to swiftly review the decision in

order to allow internet users in Kyrgyzstan to freely access this website again.

In this context we appeal to the government of Kyrgyzstan to continue to closely co-operate with the Representative on Freedom of the Media and also to draw on the assistance of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, in order to fulfil Kyrgyzstan's OSCE commitments on media freedom.

The acceding country CROATIA*, the candidate countries THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.