



## EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 916  
Vienna, 14 June 2012**

### **EU statement on Fundamental Freedoms, including Freedom of the Media, in the Digital Age**

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The European Union very much welcomes the United States' intention to again take forward the initiative regarding the Declaration on Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age and wishes to underline that human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal. The universality of human rights do not change with the introduction of new information technologies but should apply with equal force online as they do offline. With this in mind, we strongly support any initiatives that reaffirm this principle. Our belief in the universality of fundamental freedoms in the online world includes, but is not limited to, the right to freedom of expression.

Freedom of the media, including on the Internet and in new information technologies, remains an EU priority. We are determined to do our utmost to ensure progress in this field and would support a deliverable at the Ministerial Council in Dublin in December. The EU is grateful to the Irish Chairmanship for organising the upcoming Conference on Internet Freedom in Dublin. We look forward to in-depth discussions on this topic and to exploring possible outcomes of the Ministerial Council, and we will return to the important topic and the results of the Conference here in the Permanent Council.

The Acceding Country Croatia\*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland+ and Serbia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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

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