

Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 618
6 July 2006**

EU Statement on amendments to the media law in Kazakhstan

The EU deeply regrets that according to our information President Nazarbayev has on 5 July signed the new amended media law passed by Parliament on 29 June. We are worried about the consequences for the freedom of media and expression in Kazakhstan, and will continue to follow the situation of Kazakh media closely.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has pointed out that the amendments contain several restrictive elements.

By creating administrative obstacles for the exercise of freedom of the media, the amendments undermine the development of a free and pluralistic media landscape in Kazakhstan. Kazakh NGOs, journalists, parliamentarians, and even governmental officials have also voiced serious concerns. The amendments run counter to commitments undertaken by Kazakhstan. The EU expects unequivocal commitment to established OSCE norms and principles from all participating states.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Croatia ¹ and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

¹ Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process