

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union ENGLISH only**Permanent Council No. 605
27 April 2006****EU Statement on Kyrgyzstan**

1. The European Union would like to express its satisfaction with the constructive political dialogue between Kyrgyzstan and the EU. We are looking forward to a continuation of this dialogue and the cooperation between our two sides. We would like to take this opportunity to strongly encourage the Kyrgyz side to continue its policy of reforms towards a further consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in Kyrgyzstan. The EU stands ready to support Kyrgyzstan's efforts in this respect.
2. However, the European Union would like to address some aspects of public and political life in Kyrgyzstan which are giving increasing cause for concern about the future of democracy and the rule of law in this country:
3. On 12 April, Edil Baisalov, leader of the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, was assaulted and injured by unknown perpetrators while preparing for a political rally in Bishkek to be held on 29 April 2006. Even though the motives of the perpetrators cannot be ascertained yet, there is reason to believe that the aggression was intended to intimidate this opposition group and deter it from pursuing its peaceful and legitimate activities. We condemn this criminal act and welcome the immediate decision by President Bakiev to task the Kyrgyz authorities with a thorough investigation of this incident. Furthermore the European Union hopes that the opposition march planned for 29 April passes off peacefully and without obstruction.
4. While the EU hopes that the Baisalov-case will be resolved, we note with concern a number of other cases of political violence in Kyrgyzstan, including the murders of three Members of the Kyrgyz Parliament in 2006. We are concerned that this violence leads to a climate of insecurity and intimidation that could undermine the efforts undertaken by Kyrgyzstan to build a stable, inclusive and prospering democracy.

5. There are worrying indications that circles connected with organized crime are attempting to gain influence over political life and state institutions in Kyrgyzstan. We urge the Kyrgyz side to withstand such attempts with all available legal means, and to pursue with determination and vigour its course towards a free, participatory democracy, representing the will of the Kyrgyz people. Organized crime can not only seriously harm the integrity of the political process as a whole, but also the economic climate in Kyrgyzstan.

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

*Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process