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EU STATEMENT ON KAZAKHSTAN

The EU continues to monitor closely the situation of Uzbek refugees in the aftermath of the events in Andijan.

We are therefore deeply concerned by reports of the detention on 4 July of an Uzbek national and human rights defender, Luftfulla Shamsiddinov, by the Kazakh Migration Police, apparently on the grounds that Mr Shamsiddinov is wanted by Uzbekistan for crimes related to terrorism. Mr Shamsiddinov and his family were given refugee status by UNHCR on 24 June. We are also concerned by reports that UNHCR has been denied access to Mr Shamsiddinov. In such cases we attach importance to unrestricted access for UNHCR.

The EU would like to request further information from the Kazakh authorities on the arrest of Luftfulla Shamsiddinov. We also take this opportunity to remind Kazahkstan of its international responsibilities in respect of the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees.

The EU also notes that Kazakhstan has relevant international responsibilities under the UN Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT).

We would underline that we expect Kazakhstan to honour its commitments to UN conventions, which have primacy over regional and bilateral agreements, as well as its commitments to the standards of the OSCE.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia [1], the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Albania, as well as Ukraine and Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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[1] Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process