



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1024 Vienna, 6 November 2014

EU Statement on the Occasion of the Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

Freedom of expression is a fundamental and universal human right, essential to human dignity, the rule of law and democracy. November 2, 2014 marked the first International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, as declared unanimously by the UN General Assembly in December last year. This day is an important reminder of the ongoing impunity, which some continue to enjoy, including in our region for crimes against journalists.

The EU is committed to promoting and protecting the freedom of opinion and expression worldwide. We are deeply concerned about an increasing level of intimidation and violence that journalists, media actors and other individuals face for exercising the right to freedom of opinion and expression, online or offline. These people are subjected to threats, harassment, violence, and even death, for bringing to us the information and news that we need to make informed choices about our lives and societies. All too often, crimes against them are not investigated properly, those responsible are not brought to justice, and instead, a climate of impunity persists.

We recall that freedom of expression, and its corollary media freedom, including safety of journalists, is at the heart of OSCE's comprehensive security concept, and a key priority for the EU in the OSCE. Active steps must be taken to promote a safe environment for journalists and other media actors, enabling them to carry out their tasks independently, without undue interference and without fear of violence and persecution. In this context, we recall the resolution of the Human Rights Council of September this year on Safety of Journalists.

Mr Chairperson

Impunity is poisonous – it leads to self-censorship for fear of reprisal, depriving society of a free, open and informed public debate. The EU calls on participating States to take urgent and concrete measures to end impunity for crimes against journalists, including by making use of the expertise of the Representative on Freedom of the Media to fully implement their OSCE and other international commitments in this field.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and MONACO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania 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.