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**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 935
Vienna, 13 December 2012**

EU statement on the safety of journalists in the Russian Federation

The EU shares the concern of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media over the murder of journalist Kazbek Gekkiyev, a reporter with the regional branch of the national VGTRK broadcaster, in the Russian Southern Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria on 5 December.

We underline that ensuring a safe and free environment, in which journalists can work without fear of violence or harassment, is key to free media. We urge participating States to spare no effort in implementing relevant OSCE commitments, including by fighting impunity.

The EU welcomes the rapid response and condemnation by the Russian Federation at the highest level of this murder, and urges its authorities to also pursue investigations of previous cases of violence against journalists.

We reiterate our support to the Representative on Freedom of the Media and emphasise that media freedom, including the safety of journalists, is a top priority for the EU and a key issue in the OSCE area. In this context, we particularly regret that not all participating States have been able to agree in Dublin to adopt a decision on media freedom, which would have helped to promote the safety of journalists. We hope that this will be possible during the tenure of the incoming Ukrainian Chairmanship.

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, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Georgia 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.