



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1193
Vienna, 19 July, 2018**

**EU Statement on the sentencing of journalist
Khayrullo Mirsaidov**

We express grave concern over the trial and sentencing of the independent journalist Khayrullo Mirsaidov in Tajikistan.

On 11 July, Mr Mirsaidov was sentenced to 12 years in a penal colony on charges of embezzlement of public funds, forgery of documents and dissemination of false information. We share the concern of the Representative on Freedom of the Media at this extremely harsh sentence, which is disproportionate to the crime he was accused of. We note also that Mr Mirsaidov maintains that his arrest and trial were retribution for an article he wrote on corruption in November 2017, one month before his detention. We call on the Tajik authorities to re-consider the verdict in Mr Mirsaidov's case and to release him pending such action. We also urge your government to ensure in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Mirsaidov.

Journalists in Tajikistan must be free to report on all matters of public interest and human rights defenders should be able to carry out their legitimate human rights work, both without fear of reprisals. This sentencing will have a negative impact on freedom of the media and freedom of expression, and represents a setback against efforts to improve good governance in Tajikistan. We call on Tajikistan to abide fully by its OSCE commitments, including freedom of the media and of expression, and respect for the rule of law, including the right to a fair trial.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and CANADA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.