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## United States Mission to the OSCE

### Statement on Kazakh Media Law

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 29, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

We noted press reports that the Kazakh Upper House today passed amendments to the law on media that had been proposed by the Ministry of Culture and Information. This bill has now been forwarded to President Nazarbayev for possible signature. Public debate and review of this legislation would be welcome.

Our Freedom of the Media Representative highlighted his concerns about these amendments in a press release on June 19<sup>th</sup>. In that release, he stated that these amendments represented a "step backwards for media freedom" in Kazakhstan. The United States shares that assessment, which has also been voiced by representatives of the press and international press organizations.

It also seems fair to point out the criticism of this legislative action voiced recently by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Ambassador Aliyev, as well as by his wife – and the daughter of the President – Mrs. Dariga Nazarbayeva. We concur with their criticism.

In remarks to the Council on May 16th, we noted that we welcome Kazakhstan's interest in deepening its engagement in the OSCE and upholding our common commitments. It is in fact important for all OSCE participating States to demonstrate a consistent record of practicing OSCE principles. I agree wholeheartedly with the comments of the U.S. Ambassador in Kazakhstan with regard to the amendments.

This recent action would appear to move Kazakhstan backward rather than forward. We urge President Nazarbayev not to sign this particular – and unfortunate – legislation into law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.