



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1073
Vienna, 29 October 2015**

**EU Statement on the occasion of the International Day to
End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists**

Media are the mirror of our societies: if they are free and critical, we are free and safe.

Nevertheless, while we marked the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists on November 2, reporters in many countries across the world face an increasing level of intimidation and violence.

Attacks on journalist are not only attacks on the victims, but also on freedom of expression and freedom of the media. To protect both journalists and freedom of expression, it is essential that State authorities put an end to impunity and fully abide by their international obligations to effectively, promptly and in an independent manner investigate such crimes and to ensure that both state and non-state perpetrators and instigators of such violence are brought to justice.

In several parts of the OSCE region, the situation for journalists and media outlets is worrying. In recent weeks, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has, in line with her mandate, provided early warning in a number of concrete situations. This includes actions against journalists and media outlets in Turkey, the shutdown of a media outlet in Kazakhstan, an attack on a TV station in Montenegro, and attacks against journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Ukraine, the RFoM has called for the murder 15 years ago of journalist Georgiy Gongadze to be fully investigated. The Representative has expressed her concern about continued impunity for crimes against journalists in Russia, at the 9th anniversary of the murder of Anna Politkovskaya. At a successful conference on 17 September, the need to address online threats against female journalists in the entire OSCE area was highlighted by the Representative. In raising these issues, we are aware that the Representative on

Freedom of the Media has in recent weeks also raised concerns about developments in some EU member states. We remain committed to engaging with the RFoM to address challenges and shortcomings.

The European Union continues to fully support the RFoM, and the way in which she carries out her mandate. We firmly believe that her office needs to be properly resourced and that OSCE participating States benefit from abiding by their commitment to fully cooperate with the RFoM. Recent developments serve to underline the continued need for participating States to take renewed and intensified measures to strengthen OSCE commitments in the area of freedom of expression and free media, including safety of journalists, and to bring them in line with other international standards. We look forward to engaging in discussions on this as we move closer to the Ministerial Council meeting in Belgrade.

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 country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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