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EU Statement on Kyrgyzstan

The EU learnt with deep regret of the death of Mr. Almaz Tashiev, a freelance journalist, following injuries received in a beating by a police officer. This incident has been the subject of Spot Report No. 26/07 from the Centre in Bishkek.

The EU notes with satisfaction the prompt response of the Kyrgyz authorities on this occasion in launching an investigation and the admission by a police officer of assaulting Mr. Tashiev. We understand that the Kyrgyz authorities have now dismissed various police officers in relation to this incident. But as far as we are aware, the circumstances surrounding the beating are not yet clear and the motive for the attack remains to be determined. We urge the Kyrgyz authorities to swiftly and thoroughly investigate the murder of Mr. Tashiev and to bring the perpetrators to justice. We would be grateful to be informed in due course of the outcome of further inquiries.

However we must also note that the untimely death of Mr. Tashiev is not an isolated incident. In this regard, the EU wishes to recall its

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statement of 19 March to the Permanent Council on the worrying number of attacks on journalists and remains concerned with the situation of safety for journalists in Kyrgyzstan. This year alone, there have been five previous assaults on media workers. The EU would be interested to hear of what progress if any has been made in the ensuing investigations. In the light of this, we call on the Kyrgyz authorities to take all necessary steps to disperse an apparent climate of impunity with respect to violence against journalists. The EU encourages the Kyrgyz authorities to work closely with the centre in Bishkek and to regain its reputation of a country where freedom of expression is enjoyed.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA* and FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND and NORWAY, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.