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## Swedish Presidency of the European Union

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 773  
Vienna 10 September 2009**

### **EU statement on the case against Kazakh human rights defender Evgeniy Zhovtis**

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The EU has noted with concern reports on procedural violations during the trial of the internationally renowned Kazakh human rights defender and member of the ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, Evgeniy Zhovtis, on charges of causing the death of a person by negligence in a road traffic accident, as reported by the OSCE Centre in Astana in its spot report of September 8. We are also aware that these concerns have been raised by the ODIHR's Director, Ambassador Janez Lenarcic, with the newly appointed Foreign Minister, Mr Kanat Saudabayev.

These procedural violations raise serious doubts about the verdict handed down to Mr Zhovtis by the court on September 3.

The EU understands that Mr Zhovtis intends to appeal the verdict. The EU will continue to follow this case closely and calls on Kazakhstan, the incoming Chairmanship of the OSCE, to ensure that the appeal be handled with full respect for national legislation and international standards, as well as OSCE commitments.

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The candidate countries 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, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND and NORWAY align themselves with this statement.

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