



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 861
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EU statement on recent developments in Armenia

The EU takes note of recent positive political developments in Armenia. The EU has on a number of occasions raised concerns about freedom of assembly in the country. We therefore welcome the fact that, for the first time in many years, the political opposition was granted permission to hold a rally in Liberty Square on 28 April. We hope that future requests to hold rallies will be handled in the same way. This rally passed off in an orderly manner due, it seems, to the effective co-operation between law enforcement bodies and opposition groups. With Armenia due to begin a new cycle of elections in 2012, we attach particular importance to the respect for freedom of assembly.

The EU also welcomes President Sargsyan's statement of 20 April in which he called for a more meticulous investigation into the violent events of March 2008. In that same context, we welcome the fact that in recent weeks three opposition activists, Harutyun Urutyun, Roman Mnatsakanyan and Aram Bareghamyan, sentenced and imprisoned in the aftermath of those events, have been released on parole. We call on the Armenian authorities to release all the activists that remain in detention soon. The EU believes that a thorough investigation of the violent events of March 2008 and the release of all those in custody in relation to those events will help Armenia to truly move on.

Finally the EU would like to reiterate once again the importance it attaches to intensified relations with Armenia and invites the Armenian government to make full use of the opportunities provided by the Eastern Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy.

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

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

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.