



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 875
Vienna, 22 July 2011**

EU statement on freedom of the media in Tajikistan

Recalling its statement of 23 June on freedom of the media in Tajikistan and the specific case of the BBC journalist, Mr Uranboi Usmonov, the European Union welcomes the news that he has been released on bail and allowed to return home. In this statement, we raised concerns about his health, allegations of ill-treatment whilst in detention and an apparent lack of due legal process in his case, including restricted access to legal representation and to members of his family. We also referred to the fact that the BBC had issued statements saying that it had no reason to believe allegations against Mr Usmonov, and had demanded his immediate release.

The EU urges the Tajik authorities to conduct an investigation into this case in full accordance with the rule of law. We will continue to follow the case very closely and encourage the OSCE Office in Tajikistan to monitor the proceedings.

The EU supports the Tajik Government's efforts to maintain security and stability within its borders. At the same time we remind the Tajik authorities of the need to conduct their activities in accordance with their OSCE commitments, especially those relating to freedom of the media and the rule of law.

The European Union invites the Tajik government to make full use of the opportunities provided by the European Union Rule of Law Initiative for Central

Asia, one of the key elements of the 2007 EU Strategy for a new partnership with Central Asia.

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 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.