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EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1584
Vienna, 5 November 2026

EU Statement in response to the Report by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Jan Braathu

1. The EU warmly welcomes the Representative on Freedom of the Media to the Permanent Council and reiterates its strong support for the RFOM's mandate and autonomy.

2. This week, we marked the *International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists.* Freedom of expression and media freedom are at the core of every democracy, essential to holding power to account. Journalists are also protected as civilians under international humanitarian law.

3. Yet, attacks against journalists are increasing, with 2025 the deadliest year for journalists worldwide ever recorded. Journalists and media actors continue to be killed, tortured, harassed, detained and forced into exile, where they also risk transnational repression. Women journalists face gender-based violence and harassment, both online and offline. Every attack must be investigated promptly, independently, and effectively, and the perpetrators brought to justice. It is unacceptable that nearly nine out of ten murders of journalists remain unresolved, as reported by UNESCO.

4. At the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference last month, the EU recalled that media freedom lies at the heart of the comprehensive concept of security. Numerous participants highlighted the severe risks facing journalists, including judicial pressures, such as Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation and foreign agent legislation. A key recommendation was for the OSCE and its autonomous institutions to speak out promptly and clearly when human rights violations occur.

5. We therefore underline the value of the RFoM early warning and rapid response functions. A strong OSCE requires institutions that speak out when our commitments are violated.

Mr Chair,

6. In the context Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, journalists and media actors risk their lives every day. Russia must respect international law, including international humanitarian law, and stop targeting civilians. We join the RFoM in condemning the increasing attacks on media infrastructure. In Russia and in Belarus, we also strongly condemn the systematic repression of free and independent media, journalists and media actors.

7. The political and human rights situation in Georgia, particularly surrounding media freedom, continues to deteriorate, including arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment, and increasing repression, as documented in the March Moscow Mechanism report. We condemn the disproportionate and politicised sentence imposed on Mzia Amaghlobeli and call for the immediate release of journalists detained unjustly.

8. In Azerbaijan, the space for political freedom, independent media and civil society continues to shrink. In Türkiye, as well across Central Asia, journalists, human rights defenders and civil society actors face increasing pressure through restrictions on freedom of expression, judicial harassment, detention, and imprisonment.

9. On 25 October, the people of Serbia turned out in historic numbers to make their voices heard giving the next government a strong mandate for change. We look forward to its implementation , including in the relation to media freedom.

Mr Chair,

10. More decisive action by all participating States is required to respect, protect, and uphold the freedom of expression, media freedom, and the safety of journalists to implement all OSCE commitments in this field, and to make use of the tools and expertise offered by the RFoM.
11. Within the EU, media freedom and pluralism are central to our efforts to strengthen democratic resilience and the rule of law. We have developed strong safeguards, including the European Media Freedom Act, to ensure journalists can carry out their work safely and to protect media freedom. The EU remains steadfast in its

commitment to freedom of expression, media freedom, and the safety of journalists, both at home and abroad.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway and San Marino align themselves with this statement.