



German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

670th Meeting of the Permanent Council

14 June 2007

Statement of the European Union on the media situation in Kazakhstan

The EU continues to follow the media situation in Kazakhstan with great interest. We note the ongoing deliberations on a new media law, which has been welcomed by the Representative on Freedom of the Media and which, if passed and implemented, would contribute significantly to media freedom in Kazakhstan.

While the EU is pleased that the TV channel KTK and the weekly newspaper Karavan are currently operating, and that the ruling on 24 May by an Almaty court to suspend their activities has been lifted, we are concerned by the lack of clarity on the rationale behind these court actions, as well as by indications that the range of output of these outlets, for example as regards news and analytical programming on KTK, has been reduced. Further areas of concern include reports of detentions of and libel suits against journalists. It is our well-known position that the threat of an excessive use of libel suits creates a climate of uncertainty and fear and can, as a result, lead to self-censorship of the media. The EU urges that all journalists in Kazakhstan be free to do their jobs without fear of pressure.

The EU reiterates its call on Kazakhstan to take up the offer of the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media to assist in bringing legal practice relevant to the media and freedom of expression fully in line with OSCE commitments and encourages Kazakhstan to implement and respect its relevant international human rights commitments.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

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