



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1117 Vienna, 3 November 2016

EU Statement on the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

November 2 marked the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. Violence and intimidation against media workers represent not only an attack on the victim, but also on the very essence of freedom of expression. Impunity is poisonous – it leads to self-censorship for fear of reprisal, depriving society of a free, open and informed public debate. The European Union deplores that journalists in many countries across the world face an increasing level of intimidation and violence. Impunity for attacks and violence against journalists constitutes one of the greatest challenges to the safety of journalists, and that ensuring accountability for crimes committed against journalists is a key element in preventing future attacks, as recognized by the UN Human Rights Council Resolution of 29 September 2016.

The EU expects State authorities to fully abide by their international obligations to effectively, quickly and independently investigate such crimes and to ensure all those responsible for such violence – be they state or non-state actors - are brought to justice.

European Union shares the concerns of the Representative for the Freedom of the Media for the worrying situation of journalists and media outlets in several parts of the OSCE region. We echo the calls of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media on the government of the Russian Federation, including the one made on the anniversary of Politkovskaya's death, to end impunity for crimes committed against journalists, given that the Russian Federation has seen nine reported unresolved murders of journalists in the last decade. In recent weeks, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has provided early warning with regard to threats against a

chief editor in Kosovo¹, the detention and physical attack against a photojournalist in Uzbekistan, acts of intimidation and threats directed at several journalists in Serbia, more arrests of journalists in Turkey, and a physical attack and threats against journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Ukraine, the RFoM welcomed the commitment by the authorities, the media community and civil society to strengthen media freedom, and called on the authorities to intensify their efforts to end impunity for crimes committed against journalists. The EU remains committed to engaging with the RFoM, and call on all participating States to make use of her expertise in order to fully implement their OSCE and other relevant commitments.

Active steps must be taken to promote a safe environment for journalists and other media actors, enabling them to carry out their tasks independently, without undue interference and without fear of violence and persecution. In view of the upcoming Ministerial Council in Hamburg, the EU looks forward to engaging in discussions on how to strengthen joint work in this field.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

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

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.