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EU STATEMENT ON KAZAKHSTAN

On 8 April 2005 the Kazakh Parliament adopted further amendments to the Law on Elections. The EU is concerned that the amendments concerning the restriction of rallies, demonstrations, and other forms of public gatherings, organised by candidates seem to be contrary to the principle of freedom of assembly as enunciated in OSCE commitments and international standards. Recalling the President's praiseworthy rejection of the Law on Media in 2004, which also ran contrary to OSCE commitments, the EU urges him to use his competence again to refer the new law either back to Parliament or to the Constitution Council for consideration.

In response to Foreign Minister Tokaev in September 2004 the European Union stated that it considers Kazakhstan's candidacy for the 2009 OSCE-chairmanship a commitment to continue reforms and to comply fully with OSCE commitments and standards in all dimensions. The EU also stated that increased efforts to comply with international and OSCE norms and standards in the fields of human rights, rule of law, democracy and good governance would be needed to accomplish this.

The EU reiterates its readiness to work with Kazakhstan to ensure that substantial progress is made within these fields.

The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia¹ align themselves with this statement.

¹Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process