

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 808
Vienna, 6 May 2010**

EU statement on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2010

The European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the “Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on the World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2010” as issued on that very day. I will now proceed to read the declaration, to be followed by some considerations relating to the OSCE framework:

“On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, the European Union recalls those journalists and other media professionals who have sacrificed their lives or liberty in their efforts to present news and comment to the public at large.

The European Union is a strong advocate of the right to freedom of expression. It is firmly committed to the respect for freedom and pluralism of the media as outlined in Article 11 of the European Union’s Charter of Fundamental Rights. It regards this as a cornerstone of democracy and a vital component in the protection of all other freedoms and liberties.

The European Union is deeply concerned by the threats that exist towards media freedom and considers the killing, intimidation and imprisonment of journalists as a serious infringement of media freedom. It strongly condemns any deprivation of the liberty to exercise the freedom of expression as a violation of human dignity, and reaffirms the freedom of expression as a Fundamental Right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The European Union emphasises that media pluralism and freedom extends to new technologies, including the Internet. New technologies promote freedom of expression by providing individuals with unprecedented access to information about human rights and the ability to make abuses known to the rest of the world, as well as promoting other human rights. Still there are too many obstacles around the world, hindering the right to information.

The European Union recalls the consensus reached at the Human Rights Council on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, which recognises the importance of the Internet in the exercise, promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. It urges all States to take all necessary measures to guarantee that the right of freedom of expression in all its forms, is respected through respect for international human rights standards and in cooperation with all relevant international actors.”

In the framework of the OSCE, we the participating States, have a unique and highly professional institution in the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to assist us in fulfilling our OSCE media freedom commitments. The Office of the Representative plays a most valuable role through its functions of early-warning, as a watchdog and in providing professional expertise. Its approach to addressing relevant issues in all participating States, including in member states of the EU, is most welcome. We urge all participating States to fully cooperate with the Representative and reiterate our intention to cooperate closely with Ms Dunja Mijatović and her team. We encourage the Representative to continue her support to participating States.

Developments in the field of media freedom clearly show that much more must be done to implement media freedom commitments and also to review our existing OSCE commitments in order to consider where they might be enhanced and updated. The EU therefore welcomes the opportunity offered by the Corfu Process to reflect on how we might effect a tangible improvement in our performance on media freedom. In this context, we also welcome that substantive Food-for-thought papers on media freedom have already been discussed in the Corfu framework and have received support from numerous participating States.

Los países candidatos TURQUÍA, CROACIA* y la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO y SERBIA, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA, LIECHTENSTEIN y NORUEGA, al igual que

UCRANIA, la REPÚBLICA DE MOLDAVIA y GEORGIA se suman a esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.