

Prohlášení
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EU Statement on Kazakhstan

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The EU notes that on February 6 and 9 President Nazarbayev signed new legislation regarding media, political parties, elections and local government as outlined in the OSCE Centre in Astana Spot Report of 11 February. We recall that these were the four areas listed by Foreign Minister Tazhin in his address to the Ministerial Council in Madrid in November 2007 as being subject to reform in the context of Kazakhstan's 2010 OSCE Chairmanship. The EU attaches great importance to the incoming chairmanship's full implementation of this pledge.

We welcome the fact that Kazakhstan is taking concrete steps to develop its legislation in these key areas of OSCE commitments. At the same time the EU is conscious of the substantial progress which still needs to be made in order to ensure full implementation of OSCE standards. The EU is looking forward to the effective application of the new laws in a manner that will favour the prospects for pluralism and broad participation in the country's political processes.

As regards the media law amendments, the EU joins the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, in welcoming some improvements. However, we would agree with him on the need for

further reform to put the media legislation fully in line with international standards. In the same context the EU is concerned that the draft legislation on Information and Communication Networks currently being debated in the Majilis would limit freedom of the media in particular when related to the Internet in the country. We call on Kazakhstan to remedy the shortcomings, taking into account suggestions offered by the Representative.

The EU encourages Kazakhstan to accept the offers of assistance from OSCE institutions, particularly the ODIHR, in the necessary process of further improving the country's legislation in line with OSCE commitments and in full accordance with the assurances made at the Madrid Ministerial Council. We would point out that it is essential that the OSCE institutions' offers of advice be taken into account throughout the legislation process. The European Union, for its part, remains ready to support Kazakhstan in this process and in its preparations for the Chairmanship in 2010.

The candidate countries CROATIA* and FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND and NORWAY, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

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