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EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 856
Vienna, 31 March 2011**

EU statement on the safety of journalists in Ukraine

The European Union is following closely the developments in the murder case of journalist Georgy Gongadze. In this context, we note the decision by the Public Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine to institute criminal proceedings on 22 March 2011 against former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, on suspicion of involvement in that case, as well as in illegal actions against journalist Anatoly Podolsky.

The European Union calls for investigations and trials to be conducted in full accordance with the rule of law. We expect all those responsible for these crimes to be brought to justice and held accountable.

As already stated on other occasions, we look forward to progress in all pending investigations into new and old criminal cases concerning violence against journalists, in particular, that related to the disappearance of Vasil Klementyev in August 2010, a case over which the European Union has expressed its deep concern.

A conclusive outcome of these criminal proceedings is essential to uphold the rule of law, and would contribute to a climate in which journalists can carry out their work without fear of violence and intimidation.

In this regard, the EU encourages Ukraine to continue to co-operate with the Representative on Freedom of the Media and to make use of the assistance and expertise offered by her Office. The EU encourages once again the Ukrainian authorities to co-operate closely with the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine on the implementation of media projects.

The European Union reiterates its commitment to deepen its relationship with Ukraine and stands ready to assist the government of Ukraine in ensuring that media pluralism and OSCE media freedom commitments, recently reaffirmed by all participating States at the Astana Summit, are fully respected and brought forward in line with the priorities of the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda.

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

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

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.