Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Permanent Council No. 595
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EU Statement on Uzbekistan

1. The EU has learned with concern of the sentence pronounced by the City Court in Tashkent on 1 March against Ms. Nadira Khidoyatova, a prominent leader of the "Sunshine Coalition" in Uzbekistan, for a number of offences such as fraud, embezzlement, and membership in a criminal organization. The EU is particularly worried that Ms. Khidoyatova, in addition to the payment of a high amount in financial damages, has been sentenced to a jail sentence of ten years and will not be allowed to exercise a public function for three years after her release.

2. The EU urges Uzbekistan to act in conformity with all relevant OSCE human dimension commitments, international human rights standards and treaty obligations in the case of an appeal by Ms. Khidoyatova. We also urge Uzbekistan to abide by its commitments in the case of Mr. Sanjar Umarov, also from the "Sunshine Coalition", whose verdict will be pronounced on 6 March, and who has been charged of similar offences as Ms. Khidoyatova.

3. Finally, the EU will continue to follow closely the trial against Ms. Mutabar Tajibaeva. We welcome the fact that trial monitoring has been possible by observers from the European Union and other parties in this case, and we call upon the Uzbek authorities to admit independent national and international observers to other cases as well.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA country Iceland, a member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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*Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process