



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

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EU statement on freedom of assembly legislation in Armenia

On the occasion of the report by Special Envoy Ambassador Heikki Talvitie to Permanent Council on 10 March, the European Union solemnly called for the full restoration of political rights in Armenia following the imposition of a State of Emergency.

Although the State of Emergency was lifted on 21 March, a number of restrictions on the freedom of assembly remain in force. The EU notes that, on the basis of a preliminary assessment, the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR Expert Panel on Freedom of Assembly have concluded that the amendments adopted on 17 March and promulgated on 18 March by the President of Armenia to the Law on conducting meetings, assemblies, rallies and demonstrations are unacceptable to the extent that they restrict further the right of assembly in a significant fashion. The EU shares this assessment.

While welcoming the invitation from the Speaker of the Armenian Parliament to the ODIHR and the Venice Commission to review the amendments, the EU expects that work will continue at the parliamentary hearings on 15, 16 April to see these concerns with the Law addressed, and its more progressive elements restored.

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Finally, the EU calls again on the Armenian authorities to release any citizens detained for exercising their right to peaceful assembly and reiterates its recommendation to conduct an independent investigation of the events of 1 March.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia* and the 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 Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

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

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