



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

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Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

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EU statement on media freedom in Uzbekistan

The European Union notes with concern certain recent developments concerning the freedom of the media in Uzbekistan, including reports of the arrest of independent journalist Solidzon Abdurakhmonov, supposedly on drugs charges, the continuing harassment of journalists working for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and the intimidation of their families through programmes repeatedly broadcast by Uzbek state television since 9 June. These acts appear inconsistent with OSCE commitments and the assurances given to the Representative on Freedom of the Media during his recent visit to Uzbekistan as well as during the International Media Seminar in Tashkent on 9-10 June 2008.

The EU welcomes the Representative's visit to Tashkent and his contacts with high officials as a positive signal. We share his view that immediately freeing all persons imprisoned for expressing critical views and permitting the return of foreign media outlets to Uzbekistan would be important first steps toward compliance with OSCE commitments.

We encourage the Uzbek authorities to take full advantage of the expertise and assistance available from the Representative's office in beginning the much needed reform of media governance in their country.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential

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

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