Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2012

"Freedom of expression as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human rights entails everyone's right to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. On the occasion of World Press Freedom day, the European Union recalls these principles and pays tribute to all those who fight for the respect of freedom of expression and for free, pluralistic press and other media.

Censorship and harassment of editors, writers, journalists or bloggers are unacceptable, as are the use of violence and state induced arrests inflicted upon them. The EU commends the courageous work of journalists who, in often highly precarious conditions, continue to provide independent information. The EU calls on all states to guarantee the safety of journalists and to allow them to carry out their vital role of reporting and commenting on events in an independent manner without fear of violence and recrimination.

Freedom of expression also extends to the internet and other media, and the EU is firmly opposed to any unjustified, disproportional restrictions of access to or use of these media."

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland[+] and Serbia*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Albania, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

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

[+] Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

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