

## **EU statement on freedom of the media in Ukraine (20/09/2010)**

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The European Union notes with satisfaction the implementation of a number of important reforms in Ukraine. The political dialogue between Ukraine and the EU is continuing at the highest level. As mentioned by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, following his meeting with President Viktor Yanukovych earlier this week, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights are basic values the EU shares with Ukraine (SEC.DEL/250/10). In the process of reform engaged by Ukraine, it is important that the respect for those basic core values be continuously enhanced.

In this respect, we recall the pledge made by President Yanukovych in April this year to uphold media pluralism and to ensure the protection of journalists as a response to some worrying developments in the field of media freedom in Ukraine.

In this context, the EU expresses its deep concern over the disappearance of the Ukrainian journalist Vasil Klymentyev in August. We welcome the personal attention of President Yanukovych in the investigation into Mr Klymentyev's disappearance and his call for law enforcement bodies to do everything possible to find Mr Klymentyev. We will continue to pay attention to developments in the investigation.

It is of utmost importance that journalists can carry out their work without fear of violence and intimidation. In this context, the EU also expresses its concerns at recent reports of violence and harassment against media professionals in Ukraine.

The EU hopes for progress in all pending investigations into new and old criminal cases concerning journalists, in particular, that related to the killing of Georgy Gongadze.

The EU welcomes the planned visit of OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Ms Dunja Mijatovic to Kiev on 11 and 12 October with the aim of collecting first-hand information on the media freedom situation from all stakeholders, including government representatives, civil society and journalists. The EU looks forward to the fruitful cooperation of the Ukrainian authorities with her mission.

The EU 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 are fully respected, also in the framework of the EU-Ukraine Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

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