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Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2013

On the 20th anniversary of World Press Freedom day, the EU pays tribute to journalists worldwide who dedicate their lives - sometimes at great personal cost- to reporting events or expressing views that many might prefer to silence. A free, independent and vibrant press is indispensable in any democratic society.

The EU is determined to fight for press freedom worldwide and condemns the increasing level of intimidation, violence and censorship that journalists face in many countries. The EU calls on all governments to allow journalists to work in safety and security, and without the fear of censorship or prosecution.

Freedom of expression must be defended both in the traditional media and on the Internet.

The EU will continue to promote freedom of expression on-line and offline, not least as new information technologies can be key in promoting human rights and democracy. The EU will continue to condemn violations of the right to freedom of expression in all media with a view to ensuring that journalists across the world can discharge their professional duties without hindrance.

P R E S S

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland⁺ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan 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.