



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 922
Vienna, 26 July 2012**

EU statement on Tajikistan

The European Union expresses its concern about the recent events and reported loss of life in the Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous Region of Tajikistan. We hope that the current clashes will end as quickly as possible and that further casualties will be avoided. We call on the Tajik authorities to restore means of communication, to ensure the safety and allow for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population, and to establish a corridor for civilians wishing to leave the area of violence.

The European Union expresses its concern about the possible consequences of these events, urges all parties to exercise restraint and calls on the Tajik government to take appropriate and proportionate measures and actions for ensuring stability in the region.

We also stress the need to respect freedom of expression, as well as the right of people to have access to information. In this context, the European Union shares the concern expressed by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in her press statement of 24 July 2012 about the temporary blocking of the Asia-Plus News Agency website in Tajikistan. We reiterate the position expressed in our statement of 8 March 2012 in response to the blocking of a number of other websites by the Tajik authorities. We agree with the Representative

on Freedom of the Media that security concerns, however legitimate, should not be used to restrict the free flow of information.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries 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 country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

* 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.