

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1042
Vienna, 5 March 2015**

**EU statement on recent political developments in the
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

The European Union expresses its deep concern at the current political situation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The latest political developments raise serious issues such as the rule of law, fundamental rights and freedom of media, which are core values of any democratic society and are at the heart of the EU and its accession process.

We call on all political actors to act responsibly and cooperate, in good faith, to overcome the current impasse, restart a political dialogue, and restore trust in the institutions. In the interest of their citizens, the country's leaders must now act and focus together on the strategic priorities of the country.

The EU is deeply concerned at indications of wide-spread illegal surveillance of citizens, including civil society and journalists, as the Representative on Freedom of the Media has also expressed. We join the calls for the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to ensure that the content and substance of the allegations are fully and transparently investigated, with full regard for due process and the principle of presumption of innocence.

Finally, the EU draws the attention to recurring incidents of hate speech in the media in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The EU is very concerned about the further deteriorating situation as regards freedom of expression and of media in the country.

The Candidate Countries MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE align themselves with this statement.

- * Montenegro and Albania 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.