



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1260 Vienna, 27 February 2020

#### **EU statement in response to the AOB issue raised by Slovakia**

As we mark the second anniversary of the horrific assassination of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová our thoughts go out to their families and friends. The EU has strongly condemned this horrendous crime. Important progress in the investigation and prosecution of this crime has been made in the past years and we are confident that justice will be served in this case.

The EU position on freedom of expression, media freedom and safety of journalists expressed many times, including at the OSCE, remains unchanged. Free, diverse and independent media is indispensable in any democratic society. Without freedom of expression and free media, an informed, active and engaged citizenry is impossible.

All those responsible for violent acts and crimes against journalists must be brought to justice. Accountability and strong judicial processes are key. There can be no impunity for crimes committed against journalists.

The EU attaches the highest importance to creating and maintaining a safe and enabling environment so that journalists can perform their work independently, without undue interference, harassment, intimidation or fear of repression. We emphasize the importance of fully implementing the Ministerial Council Decision adopted in Milan on the Safety of Journalists, and we use this opportunity to call on all OSCE participating States to uphold their commitments in this regard.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.