

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
about working conditions for media and  
to remind about concerns regarding the Gongadze case**

The European Union wishes to repeat its concerns about the continuing problematic environment for the media in Ukraine and wants to stress to the Ukrainian authorities the need to ensure a safe, secure and harassment-free environment for journalists to operate in. It is particularly important that the issuing of broadcast licences to radio stations is conducted in a free and open manner. The European Union is keen to see this important principle upheld in the case of Radio Continent.

Notwithstanding the Prosecutor-General's comments in the Rada on 10 January concerning the Gongadze investigation, the European Union is not convinced that this case has been investigated with sufficient transparency and thoroughness.

The European Union calls for a full and transparent enquiry into the disappearance of Mr Gongadze. Such an enquiry would generate greater confidence in the Ukrainian authorities handling of this issue.

The European Union stands behind the concerns raised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in its resolution of 25 January and reiterates PACE's call to relevant Ukrainian authorities to undertake actions to improve the general environment in which media operate and, in the longer term, to set the grounds for a stable and irreversible democratic reform in the field of media in Ukraine. The European Union supports the call by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly for the Council of Europe to arrange for an independent analysis of the so-called Gongadze tapes.

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In a broader manner, the European Union recalls its attachment to a strengthening in Ukraine of political freedoms – including freedom of demonstration – which constitute the very basis of its partnership with this country under the terms of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement.

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