

## **PES Presidency Resolution Media Freedom in Serbia**

The PES Presidency today - 9 October 2014 - expressed its serious concerns about the situation in Serbia in respect to media freedoms. The ongoing pressures and control by the Government over electronic, print and broadcast media are unacceptable and must be resolved as soon as possible.

The PES Presidency repeats the concerns of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the media, who earlier this year stated: "*Arresting individuals because of their blogs, comments, or other forms of writing is not acceptable... I urge the Serbian authorities to put an end to this, and stop interfering with the work of online media outlets.*"

The PES Presidency calls on the Government of Aleksandar Vučić to:

- respect the freedom and independence of the media;
- respect freedom of speech and open political debate;
- relinquish editorial control over state media, which it exerts through political appointments;
- stop indirect funding of the media via advertising agreements with state-owned-enterprises (SOEs);
- stop all censorship of the internet (websites, blogs and social media sites).

The PES Presidency underlines that Serbia cannot play a meaningful role in the international community and cannot aspire to membership of the European Union, until these conditions are met.

The PES Presidency will continue to monitor closely the situation in Serbia, and urges swift resolution of the problems outlined above.

The PES Presidency invites the Government of Serbia to respond to its concerns and to set out publicly its proposed solutions.

The PES Presidency also noted concerns raised about similar restrictions on media freedom in Hungary and Macedonia. These two countries will continue to be closely monitored by the PES Presidency.