



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Concern about Freedom of Association in Turkey**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 17, 2016

Colleagues, more than twenty years ago in Copenhagen, our governments committed to “ensure that individuals are permitted to exercise the right to association, including the right to form, join and participate effectively in non-governmental organizations which seek the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including trade unions and human rights monitoring groups.” Just six years ago in Astana, participating States said, “We value the important role played by civil society and free media in helping us to ensure full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, including free and fair elections, and the rule of law.”

The United States supports the Government of Turkey’s efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the July 15 coup attempt, which claimed the lives of over 300 people. We stand by our friend and NATO ally Turkey in the fight against terror in all its forms, including its fight against the PKK.

As a friend and ally of Turkey, the United States has urged the Turkish government to respond to the coup attempt in ways that reinforce public confidence in democratic institutions and the rule of law. We are therefore concerned by the Turkish government’s decision to suspend the activities of 370 non-governmental organizations, including organizations that support human rights, combat child abuse, investigate alleged torture cases, and provide humanitarian assistance to people in need in Syria, to name a few.

An active, diverse civil society is a crucial element that reinforces democracies, particularly in difficult times. We urge the Government of Turkey to follow a transparent process based on evidence, and to ensure fair trial guarantees for civil society organizations and their members accused of supporting terror. We look forward to continued constructive dialogue on these issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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