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EU statement on the imprisonment of environmental activist Andrei Zatoka in Turkmenistan

Recently, the EU has learned that Mr. Andrei Zatoka, a prominent environmental activist, was arrested in Turkmenistan and subsequently sentenced to a maximum possible imprisonment of five years on charges of causing injury with intent. The EU has noted with great concern credible reports by international NGOs indicating that the arrest was arbitrary and that during the trial severe violations of due process and international fair trial standards and OSCE commitments were observed. These violations raise serious doubts about the verdict handed down to Mr Zatoka by the Dashoguz Court on 29 October.

The EU urges the authorities of Turkmenistan to conduct a thorough review of all aspects of this particular case having regard to the need for full respect for national legislation and international standards, as well as OSCE commitments. The EU will continue to follow this case closely and would welcome additional information on it by the delegation of Turkmenistan.

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The EU urges Turkmen authorities to take advantage of the assistance and expertise offered by the OSCE and its institutions on Human Rights issues and stands ready to cooperate with Turkmenistan in the framework of the EU – Turkmenistan Human Rights Dialogue.

The candidate countries CROATIA* and the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND and NORWAY, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.