



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council N°1088 Vienna, 4 February 2016

EU Statement on Freedom of Expression in Turkey

The European Union is deeply concerned by the aggravated life sentences, an additional life sentence, as well as 30 years in prison, demanded by prosecutors for two prominent journalists Cumhuriyet editor-in-chief Can Dündar and Ankara Bureau Chief Erdem Gül. This has also been raised by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and we share her concerns.

We wish to emphasise the importance of participating States implementing their legislation in line with international standards and our OSCE commitments, and in the particular context of this case, article 10 of the European Convention for Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. In case of any alleged wrongdoing, an independent and transparent investigation with full respect of the rights of the defendants must be guaranteed. It is the responsibility of the relevant political and judicial authorities in Turkey to ensure that these rights are respected.

We have repeatedly pointed out that intimidation of media leads to increased self-censorship. We recall the statement made on 16 January by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Mogherini on the situation in the Southeast of Turkey and actions against a group of academics restating that freedom of expression must be upheld, including in the fight against terrorism. We also note the constructive engagement at last week's Permanent Council by our Turkish colleagues when this case was raised.

We reiterate our support for the active involvement of the Representative for Freedom of the Media, including by training judges and prosecutors in Turkey. We encourage Turkey to continue its cooperation with the Representative by making full use of the institution's expertise.

To conclude we would once again reiterate that full respect for human rights, including freedom of expression and the rule of law is a cornerstone of the comprehensive concept of security and a prerequisite for lasting security, in Turkey and across our region.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ARMENIA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.