



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 992 Vienna, March 27 2014

EU Statement on Media Freedom in Turkey

In relation to last week's decision in Turkey to block access to the social platform Twitter, the European Union reiterates the points made at the Permanent Council on February 20 regarding the amendments of the Internet law, and would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement issued by the European Union Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Štefan Füle, on the 21st March 2014:

"The ban on the social platform Twitter.com in Turkey raises grave concerns and casts doubt on Turkey's stated commitment to European values and standards. Freedom of expression, a fundamental right in any democratic society, includes the right to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority. Citizens must be free to communicate and choose freely the means to do it. This obviously includes access to the internet. Open debate promotes transparency and accountability and ultimately reinforces democracy; such debate needs to be strengthened everywhere, including in Turkey."

The European Union also reminds Turkey of the Human Rights Council resolution of June 29 2012 and the General Assembly resolution of November 20 2013 which both affirm that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online.

We note reports that a court has now suspended the ban. That is welcome. But we recall the wider concerns expressed by the Representative on

Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatovic, in her statement on the 21st March 2014 and call on Turkey to uphold its OSCE commitments on freedom of expression and freedom of media.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, 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 SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.