

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council No. 1220****Vienna, 14 March 2019****EU Statement on refusal of accreditation of journalists in Turkey**

The European Union is closely following the issue of many correspondents from EU Member States who are still waiting for their accreditation requests to be processed by the Turkish authorities. In this context, we are concerned about recent decisions of Turkish authorities not to renew the accreditation for three German journalists. Two of them, Istanbul Bureau Chief of Germany's public broadcaster ZDF, Jörg Brase, and the Tagesspiegel correspondent Thomas Seibert, had to leave Turkey last weekend. In a third case, Halil Gülbeyaz of Northern German Broadcasting, accreditation was also denied.

No reason was given as for why they were denied the opportunity to continue their journalistic activity on Turkish soil. In the meantime, the Turkish authorities have agreed to renew the accreditation of Jörg Brase, Istanbul Bureau Chief of Germany's public broadcaster ZDF, which we welcome.

As underlined in the Communiqué No.4/2016 of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, accreditation or official recognition of foreign journalists is a core element of the Helsinki Final Act and other commitments that OSCE participating States have agreed upon. Accreditation rules should act as an enabling tool for foreign journalists to carry out their work – not serve as a tool to control content or restrict the flow of information across borders.

Echoing the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the EU urges Turkey to reverse the decisions and to issue new accreditations to journalists Seibert and Gülbeyaz. We call on the Turkish authorities to extend the press accreditations as soon as possible to all affected journalists, including several from EU Member States.

We are following closely issues of freedom of expression and freedom of the media in Turkey. The EU recalls that as part of their commitments on freedom of expression, all OSCE participating States have reaffirmed the importance of the free flow of information, and agreed to respect, promote and protect the freedom to seek, receive and impart information regardless of frontiers.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ARMENIA, align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.