



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1107
Vienna, 7 July 2016**

**EU statement on the release of two journalists and one
human rights defender in Turkey**

The European Union welcomes the release last week of Şebnem Korur Fincancı, President of Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, Erol Önderoğlu, Reporters Without Borders' Turkey representative and freelance journalist Ahmet Nesin from pre-trial detention. At the same time, the charges against these persons remain, and they risk prison sentences of up to 14 years if convicted. Also, there are a growing number of lawsuits against other journalists and human rights defenders in the same case. We join the Representative of Freedom of the Media in hoping that the release signals a willingness by the authorities to revisit this case and to attribute the necessary importance of Turkey's media freedom and freedom of expression commitments in their considerations. We urge the authorities in Turkey to ensure that any judicial proceedings against these persons are carried out in full compliance with the defendants' rights to a fair trial, as protected under the European Convention on Human Rights, and we recall that Turkey's international obligations in the area of media freedom and freedom of expression must be upheld.

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 countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members 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.