



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU statement on safety of journalists in Turkey

The EU welcomes the study by the Representative on Freedom of the Media on imprisoned journalists in Turkey. We are concerned by the large number of imprisoned journalists, the long pre-trial detentions, the long imprisonment sentences given by courts, as well as the ongoing lawsuits against several hundred others. This raises questions about how the rule of law is applied in Turkey and whether a free and pluralistic media environment in Turkey is at risk.

The study shows that most journalists are detained and imprisoned based on the Turkish Anti-Terror Law. While governments have a legitimate need to fight the threat terrorism poses to national security, the EU reiterates that such security challenges should not be used as a pretext by governments to curb media freedom. We underline that the ongoing transformation process in Turkey has already contributed to a more open and mature democracy. The ongoing trials represent a unique opportunity for Turkey to strengthen confidence in the functioning of its democratic institutions and the rule of law.

The EU believes that imprisonment for journalistic activities constitutes an inappropriate punishment. The EU therefore urges Turkey to continue reforming

its legislation in order to bring it in line with OSCE commitments and ensure full respect for freedom of expression and freedom of media in practice.

The EU welcomes the engagement by the Representative and encourages her to continue to monitor media freedom developments in Turkey. We call on Turkey to co-operate with the Representative and to make use of the assistance offered by her Office.

Finally, the EU reaffirms its commitment to Turkey's negotiation process and offers its full support to the continued implementation of Turkey's reform agenda.

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

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

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