



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU statement on arrests in Turkey

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their condemnation of the attempted coup on 15th of July last year, that tragically claimed the lives of hundreds of people and left over 2000 injured. We recall our strong belief in the unchanging value of democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights in securing the well-being, prosperity and safety of the Turkish people. We stand ready to work with the people and the government of Turkey to strengthen the country's democracy. It is in this spirit of solidarity and support for democracy in Turkey that we raise our serious concerns over recent developments, in particular the detention of a number of members of Parliament and human rights defenders.

On 5 July on the island of Büyükada, ten members of human rights organisations and human rights defenders were arrested and detained by the Turkish authorities. The EU expresses its serious concern over these arrests and calls on Turkish authorities to immediately clarify the charges. This includes: İdil Eser, Director of Amnesty International Turkey; İlknur Üstün, of the Women's Platform; Günel Kurşun and Veli Acu, of the Human Rights Agenda Association; Nalan Erkem and Özlem Dalkıran, of the Citizenship Association; Nejat Taştan of the Equal Rights Monitoring Association; and lawyer Şeyhmuz Özbekli of the Rights Initiative Diyarbakır; as well as trainers Peter Steudtner, citizen of Germany and Ali Gharavi, citizen of Sweden and the US.

As OSCE participating States, we have many commitments on the role of civil society organisations and human rights defenders, dating from Helsinki 1975 and including the 2008 Ministerial Declaration, also in Helsinki, on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In that Declaration we recognised that "human rights are best respected in democratic societies, where decisions are taken with maximum transparency and broad

participation. We support a pluralistic, civil society and encourage partnerships between different stakeholders in the promotion and protection of human rights.”

We therefore echo the concerns expressed by Nils Muiznieks, Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe, that “the use of criminal proceedings against human rights defenders for conduct that should be protected under the European Convention on Human Rights is unfortunately an increasing frequent phenomenon in Turkey”. We call on the authorities to clarify the charges swiftly, in line with the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights, and in full respect of the principle of presumption of innocence.

We again call on the Turkish authorities to ensure that its actions are in line with Turkey's OSCE commitments on Human Rights and fundamental freedoms and the Rule of Law. In particular, we highlight the extensive OSCE commitments made in Copenhagen in 1990, including the presumption of innocence until the individual is proved guilty by law, and the right of any person arrested to a fair trial; the reaffirmation of those commitments in the 1991 Moscow Document; and the Ljubljana Decision of 2005 on Upholding Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Criminal Justice Systems.

The EU will continue to follow the on-going procedure closely. The EU remains committed to working together with a democratic and inclusive Turkey, on the basis of our shared OSCE commitments to address any common challenges.

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.