



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N°1162
Vienna, 2 November 2017**

**EU Statement on the Release of Human Rights
Defenders in Turkey**

The EU has taken note of the court hearing last week in the case against 10 civil society representatives, human rights defenders and trainers who were detained on the island of Büyükada in July. We welcome the decision by the Court to release the ten individuals, pending trial, as an encouraging first step. However, we regret that the Chair of Amnesty International Turkey, Mr Taner Kılıç, still remains in custody. Any alleged wrongdoing should be subject to due process and pre-trial detention should be used only as a measure of last resort.

As we have set out in our statements of April and July: As OSCE participating States, we share many commitments on the role of civil society organisations and human rights defenders, dating from Helsinki in 1975 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 again call on the Turkish authorities to ensure that its actions are in line with Turkey's OSCE commitments on Human Rights, 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 and the right 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 very closely the on-going procedures against human rights defenders, journalists, academics, writers, members of parliament and others and urges the Turkish authorities to take appropriate steps in line with their commitments and to address the serious international concerns in the area of rule of law, democratic standards and political inclusion. The EU remains committed to working together with 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 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.