



EUROPEAN UNION

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**EU Statement on the reversal of the court decision to
release Amnesty International's Turkey chair Taner Kılıç
and the recent detentions in Turkey**

The European Union is deeply concerned about the reversal of the court decision to release Amnesty International Turkey Chair Taner Kılıç. As stated by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn on 2 February, this is yet another example of the worrying developments undermining the rule of law and independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Turkey. The continued non-implementation of the recent Constitutional Court ruling ordering the release of journalists Mehmet Altan and Şahin Alpay, in addition to the undermining of the rule of law, risks setting an unfortunate precedent as it casts doubts about the existence of effective legal remedy.

The EU is also deeply concerned about the recent detentions of hundreds of persons expressing their views on Turkey's military operations in Afrin. According to the Turkish Interior Ministry, as many as 449 people were detained and charged with propaganda for terrorism in their social media posts on the Afrin operations. Echoing the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the EU calls on Turkey to reverse the current approach toward critical expressions, release those detained arbitrarily and drop the charges against them. We will closely follow the case of the members of the Executive Committee of the Turkish Medical Association who were detained and later released on condition of judicial oversight for their statements.

The above adds to the EU's already grave concerns with respect to the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, and freedom of expression and freedom of the media in Turkey. We call on Turkey to fully respect its international obligations in these fields, including as an OSCE participating State.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* 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 and CANADA align themselves with this statement.

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