

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council No 1106
Vienna, 23 June 2016**

**EU Statement on the arrests of a human rights defender
and two journalists in Turkey**

The European Union is concerned by the detention on June 20 of Professor Şebnem Korur Fincancı, President of Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, Erol Önderoğlu, Reporters Without Borders' Turkey representative and freelance journalist Ahmet Nesin. As stated by Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms Dunja Mijatovic, the silencing of these individuals is deeply damaging not only to the affected individuals, but also to society as a whole. The detentions are a further deeply worrying step in the context of increasing repression of critical voices in Turkey and risks having a chilling effect on public debate.

Several international actors have expressed their concern about these detentions. EU High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn made a joint statement on this matter earlier this week. They stressed that these arrests go against Turkey's commitment to respect fundamental rights, including the right to freedom of expression and freedom of media. Any alleged wrongdoing or crime should be subject to due process, and respect to the principle of presumption of innocence should be guaranteed. The EU has repeatedly stressed that Turkey, as a candidate country, must aspire to the highest possible democratic standards and practices. As an OSCE participating State, Turkey has committed to respect its international obligations, including when it comes to freedom of expression and of the media. We call on Turkey draw on the advice of the RFoM and to take urgent and concrete action to reverse violations and restore respect for international commitments in the area of freedom of expression and of the media.

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.