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**EU Statement on the Sentencing of Investigative Journalist
Pelin Ünker in Turkey**

The EU is seriously concerned about the recent court sentence against well-known investigative journalist Pelin Ünker in Turkey.

On 8 January 2019, Pelin Ünker was convicted by the Second Criminal Court of First Instance in Istanbul to one year, one month and 15 days in prison, and fined approximately 1.380 Euros for “insulting” and “slandering a public official”. The lawsuit was filed by a former Prime Minister and his two sons, in response to Ünker’s publications in 2017 on the “Paradise Papers” related to their alleged offshore companies.

The EU deeply regrets that once again a Turkish journalist has been sentenced to prison because of their reporting. We have repeatedly expressed our concern about the high number of imprisoned journalists in Turkey, including many cases that raise serious questions about the state of rule of law, the respect for human rights, notably the freedom of expression, and media freedom. We join the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in stressing that the right of any individual to protect their reputation should not lead to imprisonment of journalists for their investigative work, and that public officials should endure a higher level of scrutiny.

Only last month in Milan, all OSCE participating States agreed at ministerial level to “ensure that defamation laws do not carry excessive sanctions or penalties that could undermine the safety of journalists and/or effectively censor journalists and interfere with their mission of informing the public and, where necessary, to revise and repeal such laws, in compliance with participating States’ obligations under international



EUROPEAN UNION

human rights law". The EU calls on Turkey to fully live up to its OSCE commitments and international obligations on freedom of expression and media freedom.

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, the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as CANADA and 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.