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**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY  
AMBASSADOR NACİ SARIBAŞ**

**853<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
10 MARCH 2011**

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation to the EU for the reaffirmation of its commitment to Turkey's accession negotiation process as announced at the final part of the EU statement.

I would like to thank the distinguished speakers for having raised their concerns on a highly sensitive issue of the freedom of media and expression in Turkey.

I have listened carefully to the remarks and calls of the previous speakers, and I can assure you that the points addressed will be given serious consideration by my authorities.

However, I would like to bring to your attention brief updates on legislative measures taken in Turkey with regard to freedom of expression as well as on recent investigations.

Freedom of expression and media is safeguarded by the Constitution and other relevant legislation in Turkey. Considerable amendment was introduced to the Constitution following a referendum held last September, which aimed, *inter alia*, at enabling the judiciary to function more independently and impartially.

Turkish Government is committed to ensuring that human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, be respected at all times. The exercise of the freedom of expression in Turkey is subject only to restrictions as are provided by law and are serving to legitimate aims provided for in its commitments, including the European Convention on Human Rights.

As for the remarks regarding the detention of journalists due to an ongoing investigation, I would like to inform that the journalists, along with other suspects, were arrested under allegations of membership of a clandestine criminal network charged with plotting to overthrow the government by creating chaos and disorder in the country. The journalists had been taken into custody with a number of other people. The chief prosecutor conducting the investigations announced that there exist concrete evidences that would result in the suspects being indicted for their acts that are not related to their professions.

Turkey is in a constructive dialogue with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Views expressed by the Representative and by others on the recent case of the aforementioned journalists are carefully considered.

The suspects, including the journalists, will definitely enjoy the presumption of innocence, and their case will be duly handled by the independent judiciary.

Thank you.