



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1225 Vienna, 11 April 2019

## EU Statement on the Sentencing of Journalists in Turkey

The European Union is concerned about the sentences handed down to Turkish journalists and other media actors in the Özgür Gündem trial. On 3 April, nine journalists and writers who had participated in a solidarity campaign organized by the now closed Kurdish-focused newspaper were convicted for terrorist propaganda. The Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court sentenced Faruk Eren, Ertuğrul Mavioğlu, Fehim Işık, Celal Başlangıç, Öncü Akgül, İhsan Çaralan, Celalettin Can and Dilşah Kocakaya to 15 months in prison. With the exception of Can and Kocakaya, the sentences were suspended. In addition, former Chief Editor Hüseyin Aykol received a verdict of three years and nine months in prison.

The EU agrees with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media that sentencing journalists to prison for showing solidarity with a prosecuted newspaper greatly damages the freedom of the media and freedom of expression in Turkey.

With some 150 journalists currently in detention and pre-trial detention and more than 150 media outlets closed since 2016, the environment for critical journalism has drastically deteriorated in Turkey. The EU has repeatedly expressed its concerns regarding the situation of freedom of expression and the rule of law in Turkey. We reiterate our call on Turkey to uphold its international commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the European Convention on Human Rights and to comply with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights.

The EU recalls that all OSCE participating States, including Turkey, committed in Milan 2018 to fully implement all OSCE commitments and their international obligations related to freedom of expression and media freedom. We will continue to closely follow issues of freedom of expression and freedom of the media in Turkey.

The Candidate Countries NORTH 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.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.