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EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1150
Vienna, 22 June 2017**

**EU Statement on Rule of Law and Human Rights Defenders
in Turkey**

The EU and its Member States would like to express our concern over the arrest of the Head of the Amnesty International office in Turkey, Mr Taner Kılıç, on 6 June, as well as the arrests of 22 other lawyers the same day.

We echo the statement by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks who has called for Kılıç's release in the absence of credible evidence. Commissioner Muiznieks stated that the arrest was part of "the worrying trend of judicial actions currently targeting human rights defenders and an increasingly wide range of other civil society actors in Turkey."

The arrest of Taner Kılıç adds to the worryingly large number of criminal proceedings against journalists, academics, human rights defenders, writers and lawyers and many others in Turkey, which is having a chilling effect on Turkish civil society and is reducing the space for civil society organisations and actors. The EU and its Member States call on the Turkish authorities to ensure that its actions are in line with Turkey's OSCE commitments on Human rights and Rule of Law stemming from the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, through Vienna in 1989 and onwards, as well as the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In particular, we highlight the extensive OSCE commitments made in Copenhagen in 1990, including the presumption of innocence until the individual is proved guilty by law, and the right of any person arrested to a fair

trial; the reaffirmation of those commitments in the 1991 Moscow Document; and the Ljubljana Decision of 2005 on Upholding Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Criminal Justice Systems.

Active and free civil society is a key pillar of democracy. Amnesty International is an internationally highly respected civil society organisation which plays an important role in promoting and defending human rights.

The EU is monitoring the on-going procedure closely. Furthermore, the EU remains committed to working together with a democratic and inclusive Turkey, including in the OSCE and in other international fora to address any common challenges.

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 country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ARMENIA and ANDORRA 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.