



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1234 Vienna, 4 July 2019

#### **EU Statement on the trial of academics and civil society representatives in Turkey**

On 24 June in Istanbul, the trial of 16 civil society representatives and academics began. The individuals are charged over their involvement in the Gezi Park protests in 2013. We recall our previous statement of 28 February 2019<sup>1</sup>.

We note that one person has been kept in prolonged pre-trial detention since November 2017 which can undermine the principle of presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial of the defendant.

We recall the Council Conclusions of 18 June 2019. Recent judicial proceedings targeting the legitimate and legal activities of members of civil society organisations raise grave concerns. We note the importance of civil society and the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space. The EU works within the legal framework agreed with the Turkish authorities, in line with international standards, and underlines that ensuring the legal and legitimate activities of independent civil society organisations remains of vital importance.

The EU will continue to closely monitor this case as well as trials of journalists, members of parliament, human rights defenders, lawyers and academics with the highest level of scrutiny. All OSCE participating States need to ensure every person's right to a fair trial, and to uphold the principle of the presumption of innocence, as well as to ensure the right to freedom of peaceful assembly as agreed in the Copenhagen Document of 1990.

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<sup>1</sup> PC.DEL/205/19

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of 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 align themselves with this statement.

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