



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1274 Vienna, 9 July 2020

EU Statement on the sentencing of four human rights defenders in the Büyükada case

On 3 July, four defendants, including the former Head of Amnesty International in Turkey, Taner Kiliç, were sentenced to prison terms in the Büyükada case. This is a case that the European Union has followed closely. Last week's decision of the Istanbul Court adds to our deep concerns about this case.

Active and free civil society is a key pillar of democracy. As we all agreed in Helsinki in 2008, "human rights are best respected in democratic societies, where decisions are taken with maximum transparency and broad participation. We support a pluralistic civil society and encourage partnerships between different stakeholders in the promotion and protection of human rights". In Vienna in 1989 we also agreed: "to respect the right of citizens to contribute actively, individually or in association with others, to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms" and "to ensure that no individual exercising, expressing the intention to exercise or seeking to exercise these rights and freedoms or any member of his family, will as a consequence be discriminated against in any manner", while in Budapest in 1994 we emphasized the need for the protection of human rights defenders.

We urge the Turkish authorities to ensure that their actions are in line with Turkey's OSCE commitments on human rights and the rule of law, stemming from the Helsinki Final Act, through to Vienna 1989 and onwards, as well as in line with the European Convention on Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Turkey, a candidate country, needs to make concrete progress in upholding

the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, which are cornerstones of EU-Turkey relations.

The EU will continue to closely monitor this case, as well as those of journalists, media actors, human rights defenders, lawyers and academics with the highest level of scrutiny.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA country ICELAND, member 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.