

PRESS RELEASE

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Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the latest developments in Turkey

- 1) The EU and its Member States are following the most recent developments in Turkey with grave concern.
 - 2) Renewed considerations to introduce a bill to parliament to reinstate the death penalty; continued restrictions on the freedom of expression, including social media, with further closures of media outlets and arrest warrants against journalists, including the editor-in-chief of Cumhuriyet newspaper and several members of its staff; and most recently the arrest of the co-chairs of the country's second largest opposition party, HDP, as well as the detention of several of its Members of Parliament are extremely worrying developments which weaken the rule of law, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and compromise parliamentary democracy in Turkey, while exacerbating tensions in the Southeast and further polarising Turkish society in general.
 - 3) The EU and its Member States strongly condemn the terrorist attack in Diyarbakir and express their solidarity with the victims and their families. The EU and its Member States firmly believe that all violence and terrorist attacks must stop and arms must be laid down. The EU and its Member States stand by Turkey in its fight against terrorism.
- Actions against PKK, listed by the EU and its Member States as a terrorist organisation, are legitimate, but must be in full respect of the basic principles of democracy, proportionality and respect for human rights.
- 4) A return to a credible political process and to a genuine political dialogue is essential for the country's democracy and stability in the region.
 - 5) The EU and its Member States recall that the decision by the Turkish Parliament in May 2016 to permit the lifting of parliamentary immunity of a large number of Members of Parliament is a matter of serious concern. Immunity must apply to all on a non-discriminatory basis and decisions on lifting immunity must be based on the merits of each specific case, according to transparent criteria and not subject to any political considerations.
 - 6) The EU and its Member States recall their condemnation of the 15 July coup attempt and, while recognising the need for Turkey to take proportionate action, call on Turkey to safeguard its parliamentary democracy, including the respect for human rights, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and the right of everyone to a fair trial, also in conformity with its commitments as a candidate country. In this regard, the EU and its Member States will continue to follow and assess the situation very closely and they stand ready to continue political dialogue with Turkey at all levels, within the established framework.

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 countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this Declaration.

*The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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