

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 956
Vienna, 13 June 2013**

EU statement on the situation in Turkey

The EU wishes to express its continuing concern about current events in Turkey, which pertain to its compliance with OSCE commitments, particularly with regard to freedom of expression and the media, and peaceful assembly and association. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to offer our sympathies and condolences to all those who have been hurt or bereaved.

As stated by High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on 9 June “It is essential that all violence stops and that all cases of excessive use of force by the police are recognised as such and investigated promptly, and that those responsible are held fully accountable. The continuing tensions underline the need for restraint on all sides and the importance of finding a quick solution based on dialogue, mutual respect, understanding and inclusiveness. Open and sustained engagement of the authorities is essential to reinforcing democracy, building confidence and avoiding escalation.”

We would like to reiterate our expectation that the Turkish government respect the right of all to peaceful assembly and respond in an appropriate manner to ensure public order and without using disproportionate force. We are concerned by the number of persons arrested while peacefully exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and we urge the Turkish government to release those who are still being detained.

In this context, we also expect Turkey to ensure full implementation of its commitments on freedom of expression and the media. Any limitations should be strictly within the limits defined by international law. In this regard, we would make the point that social media must not come under arbitrary pressure.

Finally, we have taken note that the government has admitted to an excessive use of force by the police and we welcome the intention of Prime Minister Erdogan to meet with mediators. We regret that some actions taken by the authorities to date may jeopardise the potential for progress and we would urge all sides to engage constructively with a view to reaching a peaceful resolution to the situation.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.